

GAY'S FABLES



"Of Manners gentle, of affections mild,
"In wit a man, simplicity a child."

Pope

Pub. Mar 1. 1800. by J. Easton Salisbury.

Harding sc

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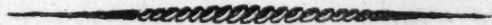
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Harding sc

FABLES
BY
JOHN GAY,
ILLUSTRATED
WITH NOTES,
AND AN
EMBLEMATIC FRONTISPIECE.



BY
WILL^M COXE, A. M. F. R. S. F. A. S.
RECTOR OF BEMERTON.



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1800.

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TABLES

JOHN CAY

WITH NOTES

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS



WILLIAM LUTHER

LECTOR OF BRITISH HISTORY

THE BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON

1800

TO
ELIZABETH,
COUNTESS OF HARDWICKE,

THIS
Illustration of GAY'S FABLES
IS INSCRIBED,

AS A
TESTIMONY OF RESPECT,

BY
WILLIAM COXE.

ORIGINAL DEDICATION.

TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

WILLIAM,

DUKE OF CUMBERLAND,

THESE

NEW FABLES,

INVENTED FOR HIS AMUSEMENT,

ARE HUMBLY DEDICATED,

BY

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

MOST FAITHFUL, AND

MOST OBEDIENT SERVANT,

JOHN GAY.

ADVERTISEMENT.

—*—

AS many parts of Gay's Fables, however plain and intelligible to persons of age and learning, want explanation for the comprehension of Youth, the Editor presents to the Public this New Edition, accompanied with Notes and Illustrations.

“ In mystic tales, and parables of old,
“ Grave eastern seers instructive lessons told ;
“ Wise Greece from them receiv'd the happy plan,
“ And taught the brute to pedagogue the man.
“ The matron truth appears with better grace,
“ When well-wrought Fables veil her rev'rend face :
“ Dry precept may instruct, but can't delight,
“ While pleasing fictions all our powers excite.
“ Our busy minds each faculty employ,
“ And range around, and start their game with joy ;
“ Pleas'd with the chase, make the rich prey their own,
“ And glory in the conquest they have won.”

SOMERVILLE's *Epistle to the Earl of Halifax, with
the Fable of Two Springs.*

EXPLANATION
OF THE
FRONTISPIECE.

SIMPLICITY under the figure of a Child, is removing the MASK OF FABLE, which concealed the bust of GAY. The Mask is composed of three Heads, a Lion, an Eagle, and a Fish, representing the three animal kingdoms. The wings of a Butterfly, expanded at the top, denote the insect tribe, and at the same time characterise the lightness and fancy, which are conspicuous in the FABLES.

EXPLANATION

FRONTISPIECE

The frontispiece is a drawing of a building, which is a representation of the frontispiece of the book of the same name. The building is a two-story structure with a central entrance and a large window. The drawing is in a simple, sketchy style, and the building is shown from a slightly elevated perspective. The frontispiece is a drawing of a building, which is a representation of the frontispiece of the book of the same name. The building is a two-story structure with a central entrance and a large window. The drawing is in a simple, sketchy style, and the building is shown from a slightly elevated perspective.

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INTRODUCTION

TO THE

FABLES.

PART THE FIRST.

The Shepherd and the Philosopher.

REMOTE from cities liv'd a swain,
Unvex'd with all the cares of gain;
His head was silver'd o'er with age,
And long experience made him sage;
In summer's heat, and winter's cold, 5
He fed his flock, and penn'd the fold.
His hours in chearful labour flew,
Nor envy nor ambition knew.

This Introduction to the Fables is exceedingly beautiful and proper; and contains a very useful moral; that man in the plainest and most humble state, may improve himself by due reflection and observation, even without the assistance of learning; and that a good and virtuous mind can draw a love of virtue and hatred to vice from the most common objects of nature.

B

His

His wisdom and his honest fame
 Through all the country rais'd his name. 10
 A deep Philosopher (whose rules
 Of moral life were drawn from schools)
 The Shepherd's homely cottage sought,
 And thus explor'd his reach of thought:
 Whence is thy learning? Hath thy toil 15
 O'er books consum'd the midnight oil?
 Hast thou old Greece and Rome survey'd,
 And the vast sense of PLATO weigh'd?
 Has SOCRATES thy soul refin'd?
 And hast thou fathom'd TULLY's mind? 20

Line 6. *To pen the fold*, means to shut up the sheep in the fold, or the ground in which the shepherds confine them with hurdles during the night.

L. 16. *Consum'd the midnight oil*. The ancients always used lamps, filled with oil, instead of candles; and hence, *to consume the midnight oil*, means to study as late as midnight.

Gay, in another work, also uses the same expression:

"Walkers at leisure learning's flow'rs may spoil,
 "Nor watch the *wasting of the midnight oil*."

Trivia, book 2, l. 557. 558.

L. 18, 19. *Plato and Socrates* were both natives of Attica, in Greece.

Socrates, the greatest of the ancient philosophers, and called the wisest of mankind, was born at a small village, near Athens, in the 4th year of the 77th Olympiad, or about 467 years before Christ. After teaching wisdom to his countrymen for many years, he was cruelly put to death, in the 71st year of his age.

Plato, his scholar, was born at Athens, in the 88th Olympiad, or about 430 years before Christ. He was the founder of the Academy, where he publicly gave lectures on philosophy, and died aged 81.

Or,

Or, like the wise ULYSSES thrown,
 By various fates, on realms unknown;
 Hast thou through many cities stray'd,
 Their customs, laws, and manners weigh'd?

The Shepherd modestly replied, 25
 I ne'er the paths of learning tried;
 Nor have I roam'd in foreign parts,
 To read mankind, their laws and arts;
 For man is practis'd in disguise,
 He cheats the most discerning eyes. 30
 Who by that search shall wiser grow,
 When we ourselves can never know?
 The little knowledge I have gain'd,
 Was all from simple nature drain'd;
 Hence my life's maxims took their rise, 35
 Hence grew my settled hate to vice.

L. 20. *Tully*. Marcus *Tullius* Cicero, a celebrated orator, statesman, and philosopher, was born at Arpinum, a city in the southern part of Italy, in the 647th year of Rome, about 170 years before Christ, and was assassinated in the 64th year of his age, by order of Anthony.

L. 21. *Ulysses*, King of Ithaca, who was at the siege of Troy, and whose travels and adventures on his return to his native country, to which Gay refers, are related in Homer's *Odyssey*:

"The man for wisdom's various arts renown'd,
 "Long exercis'd in woes, O muse! resound;
 "Who, when his arms had wrought the destin'd fall
 "Of sacred Troy, and raz'd her heav'n-built wall,
 "Wand'ring from clime to clime observant stray'd,
 "Their manners noted, and their states survey'd."

POPE's *Odyssey*, book 1.

The daily labours of the bee
 Awake my soul to industry ;
 Who can observe the careful ant,
 And not provide for future want ? 40
 My Dog (the truest of his kind)
 With gratitude inflames my mind.
 I mark his true, his faithful way,
 And in my service copy Tray.
 In constancy and nuptial love, 45
 I learn my duty from the dove.
 The hen, who from the chilly air,
 With pious wing protects her care ;
 And every fowl that flies at large,
 Instructs me in a parent's charge. 50
 From nature too I take my rule,
 To shun contempt and ridicule.
 I never, with important air,
 In conversation overbear.
 Can grave and formal pass for wise, 55
 When men the solemn owl despise ?
 My tongue within my lips I rein ;
 For who talks much must talk in vain.
 We from the wordy torrent fly :
 Who listens to the chatt'ring pye ? 60
 Nor would I, with felonious flight,
 By stealth invade my neighbour's right.
 Rapacious animals we hate :
 Kites, hawks, and wolves deserve their fate.

INTRODUCTION.

5

Do we not just abhorrence find
Against the toad and serpent kind?

65

But envy, calumny, and spite,
Bear stronger venom in their bite.

Thus ev'ry object of creation
Can furnish hints to contemplation;

70

And from the most minute and mean,
A virtuous mind can morals glean.

Thy fame is just, the Sage replies;
Thy virtue proves thee truly wise.

Pride often guides the author's pen,
Books as affected are as men;

75

But he who studies nature's laws,

From certain truth his maxims draws;

And those, without our schools, suffice

To make men moral, good, and wise.

80



TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

WILLIAM,
DUKE OF CUMBERLAND.*

FABLE 1.

The Lion, the Tyger, and the Traveller.

ACCEPT, young PRINCE, the moral lay,
And in these tales mankind survey;
With early virtues plant your breast,
The specious arts of vice detest.

Princes, like beauties, from their youth
Are strangers to the voice of truth.
Learn to condemn all praise betimes;
For flattery's the nurse of crimes.

* As Gay wrote these Fables for the use of William, Duke of Cumberland, second son of the Prince of Wales, afterwards George the Second, by desire of Queen Caroline, he very properly inscribes them to the young Prince; warns him against the seductions of flattery, the common vice of courts; and inculcates, from the example of the Lion, compassion, mercy, and the love of justice; virtues congenial to noble and generous minds.

Friend-

Friendship by sweet reproof is shewn;
 (A virtue never near a throne); 10
 In courts such freedom must offend,
 There none presumes to be a friend.
 To those of your exalted station
 Each courtier is a dedication.
 Must I, too, flatter like the rest, 15
 And turn my morals to a jest?
 The muse disdains to steal from those,
 Who thrive in courts by fulsome prose.

But shall I hide your real praise,
 Or tell you what a nation says? 20
 They in your infant bosom trace
 The virtues of your royal race;
 In the fair dawnings of your mind,
 Discern you gen'rous, mild, and kind;
 They see you grieve to hear distress, 25
 And pant already to redress.
 Go on, the height of good attain,
 Nor let a nation hope in vain:
 For hence we justly may presage
 The virtues of a riper age. 30
 True courage shall your bosom fire,
 And future actions own your fire.
 Cowards are cruel; but the brave
 Love mercy, and delight to save.

A Tyger, roaming for his prey, 35
 Sprung on a Trav'ler in the way;

The prostrate game a Lion spies,
 And on the greedy tyrant flies;
 With mingled roar resounds the wood,
 Their teeth, their claws distil with blood; 40

Till, vanquish'd by the Lion's strength,
 The spotted foe extends his length.
 The Man besought the shaggy lord,
 And on his knees for life implor'd;
 His life the gen'rous hero gave; 45

Together walking to his cave,
 The Lion thus bespoke his guest:

What hardy beast shall dare contest
 My matchless strength? you saw the fight,
 And must attest my pow'r and right. 50

Forc'd to forego their native home,
 My starving slaves at distance roam;
 Within these woods I reign alone,
 The boundless forest is my own.

Bears, wolves, and all the savage brood, 55

Have dy'd the regal den with blood;

These carcasses on either hand;

Those bones that whiten all the land,

My former deeds and triumphs tell,

Beneath these jaws what numbers fell. 60

True, says the Man, the strength I saw

Might well the brutal nation awe;

But shall a monarch, brave like you,

Place glory in so false a view?

Rob-

Robbers invade their neighbour's right ;
 Be lov'd ; let justice bound your might ;
 Mean are ambitious heroes' boasts,
 Of wasted lands and slaughter'd hosts.

65

Pirates their pow'r by murder gain,
 Wise kings by love and mercy reign.

70

To me your clemency hath shewn
 The virtue worthy of a throne.

Heav'n gives you pow'r above the rest,
 Like Heav'n, to succour the distrest.

The case is plain, the monarch said ;

75

False glory hath my youth misled ;

For beasts of prey, a servile train,

Have been the flatt'ers of my reign.

You reason well ; yet tell me, friend,

Did ever you in courts attend ?

80

For all my fawning rogues agree,

That human heroes rule like me.



FABLE 2.

*The Spaniel and the Camelion.**

A SPANIEL, bred with all the care
That waits upon a fav'rite heir,
Ne'er felt correction's rigid hand,
Indulg'd to disobey command;

In

* The *Camelion* is a species of lizard, from six to nine inches in length, and has been supposed, by both the ancients and moderns, to have a faculty of changing its colour, and assuming that of the objects near it. "Its colour, when at rest and in the shade, is somewhat various; one which was seen at Paris was a bluish grey;—but, when exposed to the sun, became a darker grey, and its less illuminated part changed into divers colours; forming spots half as big as one's finger's end, some of a yellowish hue; the grains, not illuminated at all, resembled a cloth of divers colours. That described by Dr. Goddard, in the *Philosophical Transactions*, was of several colours, a green, a sandy yellow, and a deeper yellow, or liver colour; but one might easily imagine some mixture of all colours. He adds, that upon rubbing, or warming, it suddenly became full of black spots, as big as a large pin's head, equally dispersed on the sides, all which would afterwards vanish. M. Perrault observes something like this of the Paris Camelion, that upon handling or stirring, it would appear stained with dark spots, bordering on green; and that, wrapping it up in a linen cloth for a few minutes, it would come out whitish, though not always so; but would not take the colour of any other stuff it was wrapped in. So that what Theophrastus and Plutarch write of its assuming all the colours it comes near, is contrary to experience. Others assure us, that

the

In pamper'd ease his hours were spent; 5
 He never knew what learning meant.
 Such forward airs, so pert, so smart,
 Were sure to win his lady's heart;
 Each little mischief gain'd him praise;
 How pretty were his fawning ways! 10
 The wind was south, the morning fair,
 He ventures forth to take the air.
 He ranges all the meadow round,
 And rolls upon the softest ground;

the Camelion, when placed in the sun, appears green, though near no green object; that it appears black by the candle, though placed on white paper; that, when shut up in a box, it becomes yellow and green; and say that it never assumes any other colours than these.

“ Naturalists are very little agreed, as to the reason of this change of colour; and therefore we shall not repeat their several hypotheses, the following being sufficient for our purpose:

“ The Camelion is represented as an exceeding lean animal, insomuch that the Italians call it a living skin. M. Perrault observes of that he dissected in the King's library, that one hour it appeared to be a mere skin, and yet the next it would appear plump. Hence we gather, that it must have a very great command over the skin, as to tension and laxity. Now, the animal having it in its power to fill the skin, more or less, cannot only alter the texture of the fibres, upon which their reflexive quality greatly depends; but also can bring parts into sight, which before lay concealed, or conceal such as before lay open; and it is more than probable, that the parts commonly covered are of a somewhat different colour from those always open to the air. On these principles, probably, all the phænomena in the Camelion's colour may be solved. The animal, it is plain, has a power of reflecting different coloured rays from the same parts; and likewise making certain parts reflect, and preventing others from doing so; and hence that medley of colours.”

Dictionary of Arts and Sciences.

When near him a Camellion seen,
Was scarce distinguish'd from the green. 15

Dear emblem of the flatt'ring host,
What, live with clowns ! a genius lost !
To cities and the court repair ;
A fortune cannot fail thee there ; 20
Preferment shall thy talents crown,
Believe me, friend, I know the town.

Sir, says the sycophant, like you,
Of old, politer life I knew :
Like you, a courtier born and bred ; 25
Kings lean'd an ear to what I said,
My whisper always met success ;
The ladies prais'd me for address.
I knew to hit each courtier's passion,
And flatter'd every vice in fashion. 30
But Jove, who hates the liar's ways,
At once cut short my prosp'rous days ;
And, sentenc'd to retain my nature,
Transform'd me to this crawling creature :
Doom'd to a life obscure and mean, 35
I wander in the sylvan scene.

For Jove the heart alone regards ;
He punishes what man rewards.
How different is thy case and mine !
With men, at least, you sup and dine ; 40

L. 31. *Jove*, or *Jupiter*, the supreme God of the Heathens.

While

While I, condemn'd to thinneſt fare,
Like thoſe I flatter'd, feed on air:

L. 42. The common tradition of the Camelion's living upon air is contrary to experience. The tongue is half as long as the animal; it conſiſts of a white fleſh, round as far as the tip, which is hollow, like an elephant's trunk, whence ſome call it a trunk. This it can dart out very nimbly, and draw in again, over a bone that reaches from the root, half its length. The great uſe of the tongue is to catch flies; ſome ſay the tongue is tipped with a glutinous matter, which the flies ſtick to. The Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris frequently obſerved the Camelion which they had to catch and ſwallow flies; and, upon diſſection, the ſtomach and inteſtines were found full of them.

FABLE 3.

The Mother, the Nurſe, and the Fairy.

GIVE me a ſon. The bleſſing ſent,
Were ever parents more content?
How partial are their doting eyes!
No child is half ſo fair and wiſe.

Wak'd

Wak'd to the morning's pleasing care,
 The Mother rose and sought her heir :
 She saw the Nurse, like one possess'd,
 With wringing hands and sobbing breast.

Sure some disaster has befall :
 Speak, Nurse ! I hope the boy is well ?

Dear Madam, think not me to blame ;
 Invisible the Fairy came :
 Your precious babe is hence convey'd,
 And in the place a changling laid.
 Where are the father's mouth and nose,
 The mother's eyes, as black as sloes ?
 See here a shocking awkward creature,
 That speaks a fool in ev'ry feature.

The woman's blind, the Mother cries :
 I see wit sparkle in his eyes.

Lord, Madam ! what a squinting leer !
 No doubt the Fairy hath been here.

Just as she spoke, a Pigmy Sprite
 Pops through the key-hole, swift as light ;
 Perch'd on the cradle's top he stands,
 And thus her folly reprimands :

Whence sprung the vain conceited lie,
 That we the world with fools supply ?
 What ! give our sprightly race away,
 For the dull helpless sons of clay !
 Besides, by partial fondness shown,
 Like you we dote upon our own.

Where

Where yet was ever found a mother,
 Who'd give her booby for another !
 And should we change with human breed, 35
 Well might we pass for fools indeed.

L. 33, 34. For the purpose of preserving every species from destruction, Providence has wisely and benevolently endowed all creatures with an instinct in favour of their own offspring, which operates more powerfully than almost every other passion; inasmuch, that the most timid animal will defend her young, even at the certain hazard of her own life. There is this difference between the instinct of the human species and the instinct of animals: animals forget and neglect their offspring, when they no longer stand in need of their care and protection; but mankind continue to love and superintend their children to the latest period of their existence: among animals, instinct is lost when it is no longer useful; in mankind, the place of instinct is supplied by reason, religion, and habit.

FABLE 4.

The Eagle and the Assembly of Animals.

AS JUPITER's all-seeing eye
 Survey'd the worlds beneath the sky,

From

From this small speck of earth were sent;
 Murmurs and sounds of discontent;*
 For ev'ry thing alive complain'd;
 That he the hardest life sustain'd.
 Jove calls his Eagle; at the word
 Before him stands the royal bird.
 The bird, obedient, from heav'n's height,
 Downward directs his rapid flight;
 Then cited ev'ry living thing,
 To hear the mandates of his king.

Ungrateful creatures, whence arise
 These murmurs, which offend the skies?
 Why this disorder? say the cause;
 For just are Jove's eternal laws.

Let

* Nothing is more common than to be discontented with our own lot, and to envy the situation of others, though nothing can be more unjust.

We are too apt to judge of the happiness of others from outward appearances; and yet no man can tell what passes in another person's breast. To condemn and ridicule this species of discontent and envy, and to shew that no one would accept the offer of changing situations, is the purpose of this Fable.

Horace, before Gay, had said that an ox wished for the trappings of the war-horse, and the war-horse wished to plough like the ox: in his first Satire he has also exposed this foible in a similar manner, as our Poet has done in this Fable; with this difference, that Horace introduces Jupiter offering to men the power of changing situations with others; Gay has expressed the same sentiment under the emblem of animals;

" Whence is it, sir, that none contented lies
 " With the fair lot which prudent reason gives,
 " Or chance presents, yet all with envy view
 " The schemes that others variously pursue?

" Broken

Let each his discontent reveal;
To you, four Dog, I first appeal.

5 Hard is my lot, the Hound replies,
On what fleet nerves the Greyhound flies. 20
While I, with weary step and slow,
O'er plains and vales, and mountains go,
The morning sees my chase begun,
10 Nor ends it till the setting sun.

When (says the Greyhound) I pursue, 25
My game is lost, or caught in view;
Beyond my fight the prey's secure:
The Hound is slow, but always sure.

15
" Broken with toils, with ponderous arms oppress,
" The foldier thinks the merchant solely blest.
" In opposite extremes, when tempests rise,
" War is a better choice, the merchant cries;
" The battle joins, and in a moment's flight,
" Death, or a joyful conquest ends the fight.
" When early clients thunder at his gate,
" The barrister applauds the rustic's fate;
" While by subpœnas dragg'd from home, the clown
" Thinks the supremely happy dwell in town.
" But every various instance to repeat
" Would tire even FABRUS, of incessant prate.
" Not to be tedious, mark the moral aim
" Of these examples. Should some God proclaim,
" Your prayers are heard: you foldier to your seas;
" You lawyer, take that envy'd rustic's ease;
" Each to his several part. What! ha! not move
" Even to the bliss you wish'd! and shall not JOVE,
" With cheeks inflam'd, and angry brow, forbear
" His weak indulgence to their future prayer?"

FRANCIS'S *Horace*, vol. 3, p. 3v.

And

And had I his sagacious scent,
Jove ne'er had heard my discontent. 30

The Lion crav'd the Fox's art ;
The Fox, the Lion's force and heart.

The Cock implor'd the Pigeon's flight,
Whose wings were rapid, strong, and light ;

The Pigeon strength of wing despis'd, 35
And the Cock's matchless valour priz'd ;

The Fishes wish'd to graze the plain ;
The beasts to skim beneath the main.

Thus, envious of another's state,
Each blam'd the partial hand of fate. 40

The bird of heav'n then cry'd aloud,
Jove bids disperse the murm'ring crowd ;

The God rejects your idle prayers.
Would ye, rebellious mutineers,

Entirely change your name and nature, 45
And be the very envy'd creature ?

What, silent all, and none consent ?
Be happy then, and learn content :

Nor imitate the restless mind,
And proud ambition of mankind: 50

FABLE 5.

The Wild Boar and the Ram.

30
40
50
LE
AGAINST an elm a sheep was ty'd,

The butcher's knife in blood was dy'd:

The patient flock in silent fright,

From far beheld the horrid fight :

A savage Boar, who near them stood,

Thus mock'd to scorn the fleecy brood :

All cowards should be serv'd like you;

See, see, your murd'rer is in view :

45 With purple hands, and reeking knife,

He strips the skin yet warm with life :

Your quarter'd fires, your bleeding dams,

The dying bleat of harmless lambs,

Call for revenge. O stupid race!

50 The heart that wants revenge is base.

I grant, an ancient ram replies,

We bear no terror in our eyes ;

Yet think us not of soul so tame,

Which no repeated wrongs inflame ;

Insensible of ev'ry ill,

Because we want thy tusks to kill.

20
Know,

Know, those who violence pursue,
 Give to themselves the vengeance due;
 For in these massacres they find
 The two chief plagues that waste mankind.
 Our skin supplies the wrangling bar,
 It wakes their slumb'ring sons to war;
 And well revenge may rest contented,
 Since drums and parchment were invented.

25

L. 28. *Parchment*, which is so much used by lawyers, whom Gay calls *the wrangling bar*, is made from sheep skin; but drums are usually covered with vellum, which is only parchment made of the skins of calves. It has a much finer grain. Gay observes, in another work:

"Here rows of drummers stand in martial file,
 "And with their *vellum* thunder shake the pile."

Trivia, book 2, p. 17, 18.

FABLE 6.

*The Miser and Plutus.**

THE wind was high, the window shakes,
 With sudden start the Miser wakes;

* *Plutus* the heathen God of Riches: he was represented lame, blind, and winged; lame, because he was slow in distributing his favours; blind, because he dispensed them at random; and winged, because his gifts were speedily dissipated.

Along

Along the silent room he stalks,
Looks back, and trembles as he walks.
Each lock and ev'ry bolt he tries,

5

In ev'ry creek and corner pries;

25

Then opes the chest, with treasure stor'd,

And stands in rapture o'er his hoard;

But now, with sudden qualms possess'd,

He wrings his hands, he beats his breast.

10

By conscience stung, he wildly stares,

And thus his guilty soul declares:

Had the deep earth her stores confin'd,

This heart had known sweet peace of mind.

But virtue's sold. Good gods; what price

15

Can recompence the pangs of vice!

O bane of good! seducing cheat!

Can man, weak man, thy pow'r defeat?

Gold banish'd honour from the mind,

And only left the name behind;

20

Gold sow'd the world with ev'ry ill;

Gold taught the murd'rer's sword to kill:

'Twas gold instructed coward hearts,

In treach'ry's more pernicious arts.

Who can recount the mischiefs o'er?

25

Virtue resides on earth no more!

He spoke and sigh'd. In angry mood,

Plutus, his god, before him stood.

The Miser, trembling, lock'd his chest;

The vision frown'd, and thus address:

30

Whence

Whence is this vile ungrateful rant?
 Each fordid rascal's daily cant.
 Did I, base wretch, corrupt mankind?
 The fault's in thy rapacious mind.
 Because my blessings are abus'd, 35
 Must I be censur'd, curs'd, accus'd?
 Ev'n virtue's self by knaves is made
 A cloak to carry on the trade;
 And pow'r (when lodg'd in their possession)
 Grows tyranny, and rank oppression. 40
 Thus, when the villain crams his chest,
 Gold is the canker of his breast;
 'Tis avarice, insolence, and pride,
 And every shocking vice beside.
 But when to virtuous hands 'tis given, 45
 It blesses, like the dews of heav'n:
 Like heav'n, it hears the orphans' cries,
 And wipes the tears from widows' eyes.
 Their crimes on gold shall misers lay,
 Who pawn'd their fordid souls for pay? 50
 Let bravoës then (when blood is spilt)
 Upbraid the passive sword with guilt.

L. 45 to 48. These beautiful and feeling lines cannot be too often read and followed by persons in affluent circumstances: they shew that, although there is no gift of heaven which may not be ill employed, yet that its proper use by some amply compensates for its abuse by others; and the Fable strongly inculcates this useful moral; that we are not to argue from the abuse of any thing against its use.

L. 51. *Bravoës.* Men who murder for hire.

FABLE

FABLE 7.

The Lion, the Fox, and the Geese.

A LION, tir'd with state affairs,
 Quite sick of pomp, and worn with cares,
 Resolv'd (remote from noise and strife)
 In peace to pass his latter life.

It was proclaim'd; the day was set;

5

Behold the gen'ral council met;

The Fox was viceroy nam'd. The crowd

To the new regent humbly bow'd;

Wolves, bears, and mighty tygers bend,

And strive who most shall condescend.

10

He strait assumes a solemn grace,

Collects his wisdom in his face.

The crowd admire his wit, his sense:

Each word hath weight and consequence.

The flatt'rer all his art displays:

15

He who hath power, is sure of praise.

A Fox stept forth before the rest,

And thus the servile throng address:

How vast his talents, born to rule,

And train'd in virtue's honest school!

20

What

What clemency his temper sways !
 How uncorrupt are all his ways !
 Beneath his conduct and command,
 Rapine shall cease to waste the land ;
 His brain hath stratagem and art ;
 Prudence and mercy rule his heart.
 What blessings must attend the nation
 Under this good administration !

He said. A Goose, who distant stood,
 Harangu'd apart the cackling brood :

Whene'er I hear a knave commend,
 He bids me shun his worthy friend.
 What praise ! what mighty commendation !
 But 'twas a Fox who spoke th' oration.
 Foxes this government may prize,
 As gentle, plentiful, and wise ;
 If they enjoy the sweets, 'tis plain
 We Geese must feel a tyrant reign.
 What havock now shall thin our race,
 When ev'ry petty clerk in place,
 To prove his taste, and seem polite,
 Will feed on Geese both noon and night.

This Fable exemplifies the truth of a common saying, " the
 " censure of bad men is praise, and their praise censure."

FABLE 8.

The Lady and the Wasp.

WHAT whispers must the beauty bear!
 What hourly nonsense haunts her ear!
 30 Whene'er her eyes dispense their charms,
 Impertinence around her swarms.
 Did not the tender nonsense strike,
 5 Contempt and scorn might look dislike.
 Forbidding airs might thin the place,
 35 The slightest flap a fly can chase.
 But who can drive the num'rous breed?
 Chase one, another will succeed.
 10 Who knows a fool, must know his brother;
 One fop will recommend another:
 40 And with this plague she's rightly curst,
 Because she listen'd to the first.

As DORIS, at her toilette's duty, 15

"the Sat meditating on her beauty:

She now was pensive, now was gay,
 And loll'd the sultry hours away.

As thus in indolence she lies,
 A giddy Wasp around her flies;

20

He

C

He now advances, now retires,
 Now to her neck and cheek aspires.
 Her fan in vain defends her charms ;
 Swift he returns, again alarms ;
 For by repulse he bolder grew,
 Perch'd on her lip, and sipt the dew.

25

She frowns, she frets. Good gods ! she cries,
 Protect me from these teasing flies !
 Of all the plagues that heav'n has sent,
 A Wasp is most impertinent.

30

The hov'ring insect thus complain'd :
 Am I then slighted, scorn'd, disdain'd ?
 Can such offence your anger wake ?
 'Twas beauty caus'd the bold mistake.
 Those cherry lips that breathe perfume,
 That cheek, so ripe with youthful bloom,
 Made me with strong desire pursue
 The fairest peach that ever grew.

35

Strike him not, JENNY ! DORIS cries,
 Nor murder Wasps, like vulgar flies ;
 For though he's free (to do him right)
 The creature's civil and polite.

40

In ecstasies away he posts ;
 Where'er he came, the favour boasts ;
 Brags how her sweetest tea he sips,
 And shews the sugar on his lips.

45

The hint alarm'd the forward crew,
 Sure of success, away they flew.

They

They share the dainties of the day,
 Round her with airy music play; 50
 And now they flutter, now they rest,
 Now soar again, and skim her breast.
 Nor were they banish'd, till she found
 That Wasps had stings, and felt the wound.

We are all pleased with flattery; but the Female sex are, perhaps, most liable to this weakness. Women, who only value themselves on their personal charms, lay themselves open to this reproach, as every commendation of feature or complexion feeds their vanity: but if they held themselves in proper estimation, they would surely despise the sycophant, who, while he only commends a beautiful exterior, proves himself incompetent to appreciate the advantages of a good and cultivated mind.

FABLE 9.

The Bull and the Mastiff.

SEEK you to train your fav'rite boy,
 Each caution, ev'ry care employ;
 And ere you venture to confide,
 Let his preceptor's heart be tried;
 Weigh well his manners, life, and scope; 5
 On these depends thy future hope.

As on a time in peaceful reign,
 A Bull enjoy'd the flow'ry plain,
 A Mastiff pass'd ; inflam'd with ire,
 His eye-balls shot indignant fire ; 10
 He foam'd, he rag'd with thirst of blood.

Spurning the ground the monarch stood,
 And roar'd aloud ; suspend the fight ;
 In a whole skin go sleep to night ;
 Or tell me ere the battle rage, 15
 What wrongs provoke thee to engage ?
 Is it ambition fires thy breast,
 Or avarice that ne'er can rest ?
 From these alone unjustly springs
 The world-destroying wrath of kings. 20

The surly Mastiff thus returns :
 Within my bosom glory burns ;
 Like heroes of eternal name,
 Whom poets sing, I fight for fame.
 The butcher's spirit-stirring mind 25
 To daily war my youth inclin'd ;
 He train'd me to heroic deed ;
 Taught me to conquer or to bleed.

Curs'd Dog, the Bull reply'd, no more
 I wonder at thy thirst of gore ; 30
 For thou (beneath a butcher train'd,
 Whose hands with cruelty are stain'd,
 His daily murders in thy view)
 Must, like thy tutor, blood pursue.

Take

Take then thy fate : with goring wound, 35
 At once he lifts him from the ground ;
 Aloft the sprawling hero flies,
 Mangled he falls, he howls, and dies.

The moral of this Fable may be explained in Pope's words :

" 'Tis education forms the youthful mind,
 " And as the twig is bent the tree's inclin'd."

This example of the Mastiff, who, trained to war from his youth, delighted only in broils and quarrels, shews the force of education. The conduct of children in future life, depends principally on the example and instruction of those who are placed about them.

Whatever they see and hear is a lecture to them, for shewing is teaching ; Parents cannot therefore be too careful in the choice of servants, and tutors, under whom they are placed : lest, like the Butcher in this Fable, they should train their pupils, to vicious, instead of virtuous practices.

FABLE 10.

*The Elephant and the Bookseller.**

THE man who with undaunted toils
 Sails unknown seas to unknown soils ;

With

* It must be confessed, that it is a high breach of probability, to introduce an Elephant into a Bookseller's shop ; the Author felt the objection, and has endeavoured, in some measure, to

With various wonders feasts his sight :
 What stranger wonders does he write !
 We read, and in description view
 Creatures which ADAM never knew :
 For, when we risk no contadiction
 It prompts the tongue to deal in fiction.
 Those things that startle me or you,
 I grant are strange ; yet may be true.
 Who doubts that Elephants are found
 For science and for sense renown'd ?
 BORRI records their strength of parts,
 Extent of thought, and skill in arts ;
 How they perform the laws decrees,
 And save the state the hangman's fees ;
 And how by travel understand
 The language of another land.
 Let those who question this report,
 To PLINY's antient page resort,

20
 How

apologize for it, by observing, that travellers often see and describe wonderful objects, which are not the less true because they are uncommon. Birds and beasts, in the language of Fable, may be supposed to talk, but an Elephant in a Bookseller's shop must be acknowledged to be too forced and unnatural a conceit.

L. 16. In some parts of India, Elephants are employed in putting criminals to death, by trampling on them. Hence Gay says: "*and save the state the hangman's fees.*"

L. 20. To Pliny's ancient page. Caius Plinius Secundus, call'd Pliny the Elder, to distinguish him from his nephew, Caius Plinius Cecilius Secundus, the statesman and orator, was a celebrated natural historian. He was born at Verona, in the reign of Tiberius, about the 23d year of the Christian era.

He

How learn'd was that sagacious breed !

Who now (like them) the Greek can read ?

As one of these in days of yore,

Rummag'd a shop of learning o'er;

Not, like our modern dealers, minding 25

Only the margin's breadth and binding ;

A book his curious eye detains,

Where, with exactest care and pains,

Were ev'ry beast and bird portray'd,

That e'er the search of man survey'd ; 30

Their natures and their powers were writ,

With all the pride of human wit.

The page he with attention spread,

And thus remark'd on what he read :

He was killed in 79, by an eruption from Mount Vesuvius. He wrote several books, but that to which Gay alludes, was upon Natural History; a work, according to his nephew, of great compass and learning, and almost as full of variety, as Nature herself. Yet it must be confessed, that it abounds also in fabulous stories, among which must be classed part of the account which he gives of the Elephant. He ascribes to that animal great powers of understanding, and moral virtues. The Elephant, he says, is an animal next in sagacity to the human species. For they understand the language spoken in their native country, obey commands, follow what they are taught, remember acts of kindness, and take pleasure in love and glory. They have a natural innate religion, adore the sun, moon, and stars. When the moon is full, they go in troops to the banks of a river, solemnly purify themselves with water, and then, saluting the moon, return to the woods. They assist each other at the approach of death; bedew the deceased with tears, cover them with branches, and bury them. When such assertions are gravely advanced by a learned author of antiquity, Gay is almost justified in bringing the Elephant into a Bookseller's shop.

Man with strong reason is endow'd ; 35
 A beast scarce instinct is allow'd.
 But let this author's worth be try'd,
 'Tis plain that neither was his guide.
 Can he discern the diff'rent natures,
 And weigh the power of other creatures, 40
 Who by the partial work hath shown
 He knows so little of his own ?
 How falsely is the spaniel drawn !
 Did man from him first learn to fawn ?
 A dog proficient in the trade ! 45
 He, the chief flatt'rer nature made ?
 Go, man, the ways of courts discern,
 You'll find a spaniel still might learn.
 How can the fox's theft and plunder
 Provoke his censure or his wonder ; 50
 From courtiers' tricks, and lawyers' arts,
 The fox might well improve his parts.
 The lion, wolf, and tiger's brood,
 He curses, for their thirst of blood :
 But is not man to man a prey ? 55
 Beasts kill for hunger, men for pay.

The Bookseller, who heard him speak,
 And saw him turn a page of Greek,
 Thought, what a genius have I found !
 Then thus address'd with bow profound : 60

Learn'd Sir, if you'd employ your pen
 Against the senseless sons of men,

35 Or write the History of Siam,
 No man is better pay than I am;
 Or, since you're learn'd in Greek, let's see 65
 Something against the Trinity.

When wrinkling with a sneer his trunk,
 40 Friend, quoth the Elephant, you're drunk;
 E'en keep your money and be wise:
 Leave man on man to criticise; 70
 For that you ne'er can want a pen
 Among the senseless sons of men.

45 They unprovok'd will court the fray:
 Envy's a sharper spur than pay.
 No author ever spar'd a brother; 75
 Wits are game-cocks to one another.

50 L. 63. Elephants are very common in many parts of India;
 but are supposed to abound most in Siam, a peninsula in the East
 Indies.

It is related by a traveller, that the King of Siam had 20,000
 Elephants in his dominions, without reckoning those that are
 wild, and live in the woods and mountains, of which fifty, sixty,
 or even eighty, are sometimes taken in a single hunting match.

BUFFON, v. 6, p. 29.



FABLE 11.

The Peacock, the Turkey, and the Goose.

IN beauty faults conspicuous grow:
 The smallest speck is seen on snow.
 As near a barn, by hunger led,
 A Peacock with the poultry fed;
 All view'd him with an envious eye,
 And mock'd his gaudy pageantry.
 He, conscious of superior merit,
 Contemns their base reviling spirit;
 His state and dignity assumes,
 And to the sun displays his plumes;
 Which, like the heav'ns o'er arching skies,
 Are spangled with a thousand eyes.
 The circling rays, and varied light,
 At once confound their dazzled sight:
 On ev'ry tongue attraction burns,
 And malice prompts their spleen by turns.
 Mark, with what insolence and pride,
 The creature takes his haughty stride,
 The Turkey cries. Can spleen contain?
 Sure never bird was half so vain!

 20
 But

But were intrinsic merit seen,
We Turkeys have the whiter skin.

From tongue to tongue they caught abuse;
And next was heard the hissing Goose;
What hideous legs, what filthy claws! 25
I scorn to censure little flaws.
Then what a horrid squalling throat!
Ev'n owls are frightened at the note.

True, those are faults, the Peacock cries;
My scream, my shanks you may despise: 30
But such blind critics rail in vain;
What, overlook my radiant train!
Know, did my legs (your scorn and sport)
The Turkey or the Goose support,
And did you scream with harsher sound, 35
Those faults in you had ne'er been found:
To all apparent beauties blind,
Each blemish strikes an envious mind.

Thus in assemblies have I seen
A nymph of brightest charms and mien, 40
Wake envy in each ugly face:
And buzzing scandal fills the place.

This Fable, in the beautiful allegory of the Peacock, envied by other birds for his fine plumage, condemns the mean passions of jealousy and malice, to which young persons are often inclined. We are too apt to consider the bad, rather than the good qualities of others; to censure faults in persons of merit, and overlook their virtues. But goodness of heart, and greatness of mind, act otherwise; they overlook small faults, and do not see specks in snow.

FABLE 12.

Cupid, Hymen, and Plutus.*

AS Cupid, in Cythera's grove,
 Employ'd the lesser powers of love;
 Some shape the bow, or fit the string;
 Some give the taper shaft its wing,
 Or turn the polish'd quiver's mould,
 Or head the darts with temper'd gold.

* Cupid, the God of Love, is always represented as a beautiful infant, with a quiver on his back, bow and arrow in his hand, and a veil over his eyes, to shew that he shoots at random.

L. 1. *Cythera*, an island not far from Crete, in the Archipelago, sacred to Venus, from whence she was called *Cytherea*.

The Reader, perhaps, will not be displeased to compare a similar passage in another work of Gay:

"Far in Cythera stands a spacious grove,
 "Sacred to Venus and the God of Love;
 "Here busy Cupids, with pernicious art,
 "Form the stiff bow, and forge the fatal dart.
 "All share the toil: while some the bellows ply,
 "Others with feathers teach the shafts to fly:
 "Some with joint force whirl round the stony wheel,
 "Where streams the sparkling fire from temper'd steel;
 "Some point their arrows with the nicest skill,
 "And with the warlike store their quivers fill."

The Fan, b. 1. l. 93, 103, &c.

Amidst

Amidst their toil and various care,
 Thus Hymen, with assuming air,
 Address'd the God : Thou purblind chit,
 Of aukward and ill-judging wit, 10
 If matches are not better made,
 At once I must forswear my trade:
 You send me such ill-coupled folks,
 That 'tis a shame to sell them yokes.
 They squabble for a pin, a feather, 15
 And wonder how they came together.
 The husband's fullen, dogged, shy,
 The wife grows flippant in reply ;
 He loves command and due restriction,
 And she as well likes contradiction : 20

L. 8. *Hymen*. The heathen God of Marriage. He was painted as a beautiful youth crowned with roses, and holding in his hand a torch, to represent the flame of pure love. His figure is well described by Cawthorne :

" This mild divinity, so sung
 " By half the poets old and young,
 " The patron of connubial truth,
 " Was now in all the bloom of youth.
 " Roses fresh gather'd from the bush,
 " Sweet emblems of the female blush,
 " Wove in a wreath supremely fair,
 " Sat graceful on his auburn hair.
 " One hand sustain'd a torch on fire,
 " Significant of soft desire ;
 " The other held, in mystic shew,
 " A broider'd veil of saffron hue :
 " Majestic flow'd his azure vest,
 " And rubies bled upon his breast."

CAWTHORN'S *Temple of Hymen*. JOHNSON'S POETS,
 v. 65, p. 272.

She

She never slavishly submits;
 She'll have her will, or have her fits:
 He this way tugs, she t'other draws:
 The man grows jealous, and with cause.
 Nothing can save him but divorce;
 And here the wife complies of course.

25

When, says the Boy, had I to do
 With either your affairs or you?
 I never idly spend my darts;
 You trade in mercenary hearts.
 For settlements the lawyer's fee'd;
 Is my hand witness to the deed?
 If they like cat and dog agree,
 Go rail at Plutus, not at me.

30

Plutus appear'd, and said 'tis true,
 In marriage, gold is all their view:
 They seek not beauty, wit, or sense;
 And love is seldom the pretence.
 All offer incense at my shrine,
 And I alone the bargain sign.
 How can BELINDA blame her fate?
 She only ask'd a great estate.

35

DORIS was rich enough, 'tis true:
 Her lord must give her title too:
 And ev'ry man, or rich, or poor,
 A fortune asks, and asks no more:

45

Av'rice, whatever shape it bears,
 Must still be coupled with its cares:

FABLE

FABLE 13.

The Famine Stag.

25 AS a young Stag the thicket past,
 30 The branches held his antlers fast;
 A clown, who saw the captive hung,
 Across the horns his halter flung.
 Now safely hamper'd in the cord, 5
 He bore the present to his lord;
 35 His lord was pleas'd; as was the clown,
 When he was tipt with half-a-crown.
 The Stag was brought before his wife;
 The tender lady begg'd his life. 10
 How sleek's the skin! how speck'd like ermine!
 40 Sure never creature was so charming!

At first within the yard confin'd,
 He flies and hides from all mankind;
 Now bolder grown, with fix'd amaze, 15
 And distant awe, presumes to gaze;
 45 Munches the linen on the lines,
 And on a hood or apron dines:
 He steals my little master's bread,
 Follows the servants to be fed: 20

Nearer

Nearer and nearer now he stands,
 To feel the praise of patting hands;
 Examines ev'ry fist for meat,
 And though repuls'd, disdains retreat;
 Attacks again with level'd horns;
 And man, that was his terror, scorns.

25

Such is the country maiden's fright,
 When first a red-coat is in sight;
 Behind the door she hides her face;
 Next time at distance eyes the lace:
 She now can all his terrors stand,
 Nor from his squeeze withdraws her hand.
 She plays familiar in his arms,
 And ev'ry soldier hath her charms.
 From tent to tent she spreads her flame;
 For custom conquers fear and shame.

30

35

The moral of this Fable is excellent, as it points out the extreme danger to which young women expose themselves, when they first shake off that modest reserve, which is so characteristic of the sex. To use the beautiful language of Scripture, "As a pearl in a swine's mouth, so is a fair woman without discretion."



FABLE

FABLE 14.

The Monkey who had seen the World.

A MONKEY, to reform the times,

Resolv'd to visit foreign climes :

For men in distant regions roam

To bring politer manners home.

So forth he fares, all toil defies :

Misfortune serves to make us wise.

At length the treach'rous snare was laid ;

Poor Pug was caught, to town convey'd,

There sold. How envy'd was his doom,

Made captive in a lady's room !

Proud as a lover of his chains,

He day by day her favour gains.

Whene'er the duty of the day

The toilet calls ; with mimic play

He twirls her knots, he cracks her fan,

Like any other gentleman.

In visits too his parts and wit,

When jests grew dull, were sure to hit.

Proud with applause, he thought his mind

In ev'ry courtly art refin'd ;

Like

Like ORPHEUS, burnt with public zeal,
 To civilize the public weal:
 So watch'd occasion, broke his chain,
 And fought his native woods again.

The hairy sylvans round him press,
 Astonish'd at his strut and dress.

Some praise his sleeve; and others glote
 Upon his rich embroider'd coat;

His dapper perriwig commending,
 With the black tail behind depending;

His powder'd back, above, below,
 Like hoary frost, or fleecy snow;

L. 22. *Orpheus*, an ancient Grecian poet and musician, according to *Virgil*, the son of *Apollo* and the muse *Polyhymnia*. *Apollo* gave him a lyre, on which he played so divinely, that he is said to have moved even beasts and inanimate things.

Others consider the account as a mere allegory; and represent *Orpheus* as a King of *Thrace*, who travelled in order to civilize mankind, then in a state of barbarism; and it is thus *Horace* explains his history:

"The wood-born race of men, when *Orpheus* tam'd,

"From acorns and from mutual blood reclaim'd,

"This priest divine, is fabled to assuage

"The tiger's fierceness, and the lion's rage."

FRANCIS.

"*Sylvestres Homines*," &c. *Ars. Poet.* l. 391. And under this character *Gay* also considers *Orpheus*.

L. 27. *Glote*, probably for *glout*; and means, to look swollen with envy.—He uses the same word in another place:

"With malice hiss, with envy glote."

Fable 23, l. 29.

But

But all with envy and desire,
His flatt'ring shoulder-knot admire.

Hear and improve, he pertly cries; 35

I come to make a nation wise.

25 Weigh your own words; support your place,

The next in rank to human race.

In cities long I pass'd my days,

Convers'd with men, and learnt their ways, 40

Their dress, their courtly manners see;

30 Reform your state and copy me.

Seek ye to thrive? in flatt'ry deal;

Your scorn, your hate, with that conceal.

Seem only to regard your friends, 45

But use them for your private ends.

Stint not to truth the flow of wit;

Be prompt to lie whene'er 'tis fit.

Bend all your force to spatter merit:

Scandal is conversation's spirit. 50

Boldly to ev'ry thing pretend,

And men your talents shall commend.

I knew the great. Observe me right;

So shall you grow, like man, polite.

He spoke and bow'd: with mutt'ring jaws 55

The wond'ring circle grinn'd applause.

Now, warm with malice, envy, spite,

Their most obliging friends they bite?

And, fond to copy human ways,

Practise new mischiefs all their days. 60

Thus

Thus the dull lad, too tall for school,
 With travel finishes the fool;
 Studious of ev'ry coxcomb's airs,
 He drinks, games, dresses, lies, and swears;
 O'erlooks with scorn all virtuous arts,
 For vice is fitted to his parts.

FABLE 15.

The Philosopher and the Pheasants.

THE Sage, awak'd at early day,
 Through the deep forest took his way;
 Drawn by the music of the groves,
 Along the winding gloom he roves;
 From tree to tree, the warbling throats
 Prolong the sweet alternate notes.
 But where he pass'd, he terror threw,
 The song broke short, the warblers flew;
 The thrushes chatter'd with affright,
 And nightingales abhor'd his sight;

All

FABLE 15. PART 1.

45

All animals before him ran,
To shun the hateful sight of man.

Whence is this dread of ev'ry creature?

65 Fly they our figure, or our nature?

As thus he walk'd in musing thought, 15

His ear imperfect accents caught;

With cautious step he nearer drew,

By the thick shade conceal'd from view.

High on the branch a Pheasant stood,

Around her all her list'ning brood; 20

Proud of the blessings of her nest,

She thus a mother's care exprest:

No dangers here shall circumvent,

Within the woods enjoy content;

Sooner the hawk or vulture trust, 25

Than man, of animals the worst;

In him ingratitude you find,

A vice peculiar to the kind.

The sheep, whose annual fleece is dy'd,

To guard his health, and serve his pride, 30

Forc'd from his fold and native plain,

Is in the cruel shambles slain:

5 The swarms, who, with industrious skill,

His hives with wax and honey fill,

In vain whole summer days employ'd, 35

Their stores are fold, their race destroy'd.

What tribute from the goose is paid?

Does not her wing all science aid?

Does

Does it not lovers' hearts explain,
 And drudge to raise the merchant's gain?
 What now rewards this general use?
 He takes the quills, and eats the goose.
 Man then avoid; detest his ways;
 So safety shall prolong your days.
 When services are thus acquitted,
 Be sure we Pheasants must be spitted.

L. 39. This sentiment is beautifully expressed by Pope:

"Heav'n first taught letters for some wretch's aid,
 "Some banish'd lover, or some captive maid;
 "They live, they speak, they breathe what love inspires,
 "Warm to the soul, and faithful to its fires,
 "The virgin's wish without her fears impart,
 "Excuse the blush, and pour out all the heart;
 "Spread the soft influence from soul to soul,
 "And waft a sigh from Indos to the Pole."

POPE'S *Epistle from Eloisa to Abelard*, l. 51.

Gay, though naturally well tempered, seems to have caught from his friends, Swift and Pope, the contagion of spleen and discontent; and too often, as in this Fable, places human nature in an unfavourable light.

FABLE 16.

The Pin and the Needle.

A PIN, who long had serv'd a beauty,
 Proficient in the toilet's duty,

And

And form'd her sleeve, confin'd her hair,
 Or giv'n her knot a smarter air;
 Now nearest to her heart was plac'd, 5
 Now in her mantua's tail disgrac'd;
 But could she partial fortune blame,
 Who saw her lovers serv'd the same?
 At length, from all her honours cast,
 Through various turns of life she past; 10
 Now glitter'd on a tailor's arm,
 Now kept a beggar's infant warm;
 Now rang'd within a miser's coat,
 Contributes to his yearly groat;
 Now, rais'd again from low approach, 15
 She visits in the doctor's coach;
 Here, there, by various fortune tost,
 At last in Gresham-hall was lost.
 Charm'd with the wonders of the show,
 On ev'ry side, above, below, 20
 She now of this or that enquires,
 What least was understood admires;
 'Tis plain, each thing so struck her mind,
 Her head's of virtuoso kind.

L. 14. It is a vulgar saying, that a pin a day, is worth a *great* at the end of the year.

L. 18. *Gresham Hall*. Originally the house of Sir Thomas Gresham, in Winchester-street, fronting to Bishopsgate street, converted, by his testament, into a college, and provided with a curious museum. No remains of this College now subsist.

PENNANT's *London*, p. 470.

And

And pray, what's this, and this, dear fir?
 A Needle, says th' Interpreter.
 She knew the name; and thus the fool
 Address'd her as a tailor's tool:

A Needle with that filthy stone,
 Quite idle, all with rust o'ergrown!
 You better might employ your parts,
 And aid the sempstrefs in her arts.
 But tell me how the friendship grew
 Between that paltry flint and you?

Friend, says the Needle, cease to blame;
 I follow real worth and fame.
 Know'st thou the loadstone's pow'r and art,
 That virtue virtues can impart?
 Of all his talents I partake,
 Who then can such a friend forsake?
 'Tis I direct the pilot's hand
 To shun the rocks and treach'rous sand;
 By me the distant world is known,
 And either India is our own.

L. 29, 37. The *Needle*, when touched with the *Loadstone*, and placed perpendicularly on a pivot in an instrument, is called the *Mariner's Compass*; it always points to the North Pole, on this side of the Equator; and to the South Pole on the other side; by which means the course of the vessel is determined. The *Compass* was invented in the fourteenth century; and its invention was soon followed by the discovery of America, and of the passage to the East-Indies, by the Cape of Good Hope.

L. 44. *Either India*. The East and West Indies.

Had I with milliners been bred,
 What had I been? the guide of thread,
 And drudg'd as vulgar needles do,
 Of no more consequence than you.

The moral of this Fable is excellent; it implies, that the meanest and lowest may, by associating with persons of virtue, merit, and talents, rise to great eminence.

FABLE 17.

The Shepherd's Dog and the Wolf.

A WOLF, with hunger fierce and bold,
 Ravag'd the plains and thinn'd the fold:
 Deep in the wood secure he lay,
 The thefts of night regal'd the day.
 In vain the shepherd's wakeful care
 Had spread the toils, and watch'd the snare:
 In vain the Dog pursu'd his pace,
 The fleeter robber mock'd the chase.

As Lightfoot rang'd the forest round,
 By chance his foe's retreat he found:

D

10
Let

Let us a while the war suspend,
And reason as from friend to friend.

A truce! replies the Wolf. 'Tis done.
The Dog the parley thus begun:

How can that strong intrepid mind
Attack a weak defenceless kind?

15

Those jaws should prey on nobler food,
And drink the boar's and lion's blood:

Great souls with gen'rous pity melt,
Which coward tyrants never felt.

20

How harmless is our fleecy care!

Be brave, and let thy mercy spare.

Friend, says the Wolf, the matter weigh;

Nature design'd us beasts of prey;

As such, when hunger finds a treat,

25

'Tis necessary Wolves should eat.

If, mindful of the bleating weal,

Thy bosom burn with real zeal;

Hence, and thy tyrant lord beseech:

To him repeat the moving speech.

30

A Wolf eats sheep but now and then,

Ten thousands are devour'd by men.

An open foe may prove a curse,

But a pretended friend is worse.

FABLE 18.

A Painter who pleased Nobody and Every Body.

LEST men suspect your tale untrue,
Keep probability in view.

The trav'ler leaping o'er those bounds,
The credit of his book confounds.

Who with his tongue hath armies routed,

5

Makes ev'n his real courage doubted.

But flatt'ry never seems absurd;

The flatter'd always take your word:

Impossibilities seem just;

They take the strongest praise on trust.

10

Hyperboles, tho' ne'er so great,

Will still come short of self-conceit.

So very like a Painter drew,

That ev'ry eye the picture knew:

He hit complexion, feature, air,

15

So just, the life itself was there.

L. 11: *Hyperbole*. From the Greek word, ὑπερβολή, a throw beyond the mark, means an exaggeration beyond the truth.

No flatt'ry with his colours laid,
 To bloom restor'd the faded maid;
 He gave each muscle all its strength;
 The mouth, the chin, the nose's length.
 His honest pencil touch'd with truth,
 And mark'd the date of age and youth.
 He lost his friends, his practice fail'd;
 Truth should not always be reveal'd;
 In dusty piles his pictures lay,
 For no one sent the second pay.
 Two bustos, fraught with ev'ry grace,
 A VENUS' and APOLLO's face,
 He plac'd in view; resolv'd to please,
 Whoever sat, he drew from these,
 From these corrected ev'ry feature,
 And spirited each aukward creature.
 All things were set; the hour was come,
 His pallet ready o'er his thumb.
 My Lord appear'd; and seated right,
 In proper attitude and light:
 The Painter look'd, he sketch'd the piece,
 Then dipt his pencil, talk'd of Greece,
 Of TITIAN's tints, of GUIDO's air;
 Those eyes, my Lord, the spirit there

40
Might

L. 39. *Titian*. A famous Painter of the Venetian school, remarkable for the liveliness of his tints or colours; born in 1477 at Cadore, in Venetian Friuli, died in 1576, aged 99.

Guido.

Might well a RAPHAEL's hand require,
To give them all the native fire :

The features fraught with sense and wit,

20 You'll grant are very hard to hit ;

But yet with patience you shall view

45

As much as paint and art can do.

Observe the work. My Lord reply'd

'Till now I thought my mouth was wide ;

25 Besides, my nose is somewhat long ;

Dear sir, for me, 'tis far too young.

50

Oh ! pardon me, the Artist cry'd,

In this we Painters must decide.

The piece e'en common eyes must strike,

30 I warrant it extremely like.

Guido. A famous Painter of the Bolognese school, remarkable for the graceful *air* of his heads, born at Bologna in 1575, died in 1641, aged 67.

35 L. 41. *Raphael.* Esteemed the greatest of all Painters, born at Urbino in 1483, died at Rome in 1520, in the 38th year of his age.

These three Painters seem to have been the favourites of Gay, and in his Epistle to Paul Methuen, Esq. he again singles them out :

“ Why didst thou, Kent, forego thy native land,

“ To emulate in picture RAPHAEL's hand ?

“ Think'st thou for this to raise thy name at home ?

“ Go back, adorn the palaces of Rome ;

“ There on the walls let thy just labours shine,

“ And Raphael live again in thy design.

“ Yet stay awhile : call all thy genius forth,

“ For Burlington unbias'd knows thy worth ;

“ His judgment in thy master-strokes can trace,

“ TITIAN's strong fire, and GUIDO's foster grace.”

GAY's *Poems*, in JOHNSON'S *POETS*, v. 36, p. 184.

My Lord examin'd it a-new ;
No looking-glass seem'd half so true.

A Lady came ; with borrow'd grace ;
He from his VENUS form'd her face.
Her lover prais'd the Painter's art ;
So like the picture in his heart !
To ev'ry age some charms he lent ;
Ev'n beauties were almost content.

Through all the town his art they prais'd ;
His custom grew, his price was rais'd.
Had he the real likeness shown,
Would any man the picture own ?
But when thus happily he wrought,
Each found the likeness in his thought.

The moral of this Fable is extremely faulty. For it seems to imply, that because flattery was attended with success in the instance of the Painter, therefore this example is commendable and worthy of being followed : whereas nothing can be more erroneous, both in moral and practice. A Painter who follows this conduct, would be sure of gaining no employment ; for portrait painting implies, to take likenesses ; and if no likeness is taken even should the Limner paint Apollos and Venusses, it is impossible he should succeed. It is far more likely, that a Painter like Sir Godfrey Kneller, should obtain practice, than such a flatterer. Sir Godfrey being applied to by a person who had no expression of countenance, refused to draw his portrait, because he said *he had no face*. Gay acted very injudiciously in this instance. In the address to the Duke of Cumberland, he mentions flattery as a vice, and here he describes it, as a means of success ironically, perhaps ; but the irony is difficult to be understood by young persons.

FABLE 19.

The Lion and the Cub.

HOW fond are men of rule and place,
Who court it from the mean and base !

These cannot bear an equal nigh,
But from superior merit fly.

They love the cellar's vulgar joke,
And lose their hours in ale and smoke ;

There o'er some petty club preside :

So poor, so paltry is their pride !

Nay, ev'n with fools whole nights will sit,

In hopes to be supreme in wit.

If these can read, to these I write,

To set their worth in truest light.

A Lion-cub, of sordid mind,

Avoided all the lion kind ;

Fond of applause, he sought the feasts

Of vulgar and ignoble beasts ;

With asses all his time he spent,

Their club's perpetual president.

He caught their manners, looks, and airs ;

An ass in every thing but ears !

If e'er his highness meant a joke ;
 They grinn'd applause before he spoke !
 But at each word what shouts of praise !
 Good gods ! how natural he brays !

Elate with flatt'ry and conceit,
 He seeks his royal fire's retreat ;
 Forward and fond to shew his parts,
 His highness brays ; the lion starts.

Puppy, that curs'd vociferation
 Betrays thy life and conversation :
 Coxcombs, an ever-noisy race,
 Are trumpets of their own disgrace.

Why so severe ? the Cub replies ;
 Our senate always held me wise.

How weak is pride ! returns the fire ;
 All fools are vain, when fools admire !
 But know, what stupid asses prize,
 Lions and noble beasts despise.

The folly of seeking applause from persons of inferior situation and abilities, is justly reprobated in this beautiful Fable, in the example of the young Lion, an absurdity finely ridiculed by Pope, in his Prologue to the *Satyr*s :

" To sit attentive to our own applause,
 " While Wits and Templars every sentence raise,
 " And wonder with a foolish face of praise."

On the contrary, there is no stronger proof of good sense, than to profit by the advantages of that situation in which we are placed by Providence, by associating with persons of superior wisdom and virtue :

" The wise, new wisdom from the wise acquire,
 " And each brave hero fans another's fire."

POPE'S *Homer*.

FABLE

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FABLE 20.

The Old Hen and the Cock.

25
30 **R**ESTRAIN your child : you'll soon believe
The text which says, we sprung from Eve.

As an old Hen led forth her train,
And seem'd to peck to shew the grain;
35 She rak'd the chaff, she scratch'd the ground, 5
And glean'd the spacious yard around.

A giddy chick, to try her wings,
On the well's narrow margin springs,
And prone she drops. The Mother's breast
All day with sorrow was possess'd. 10

A Cock she met ; her son she knew ;
And in her heart affection grew.

My son, says she, I grant your years
Have reach'd beyond a Mother's cares ;
I see you vig'rous, strong, and bold ; 15
I hear with joy your triumphs told.

'Tis not from Cocks thy fate I dread ;
But let thy ever-wary tread

D 5

Avoid

Avoid yon well; that fatal place
Is sure perdition to our race.
Print this my counsel on thy breast;
To the just gods I leave the rest.

He thank'd her care; yet day by day
His bosom burn'd to disobey;
And ev'ry time the well he saw,
Scorn'd in his heart the foolish law;
Near and more near each day he drew,
And long'd to try the dang'rous view.

Why was this idle charge? he cries:
Let courage female fears despise!
Or did she doubt my heart was brave,
And therefore this injunction gave?
Or does her harvest store the place,
A treasure for her younger race?
And would she thus my search prevent?
I stand resolv'd, and dare th' event.

Thus said. He mounts the margin's round,
And pries into the depth profound.
He stretch'd his neck; and from below
With stretching neck advanc'd a foe:
With wrath his ruffled plumes he rears,
The foe with ruffled plumes appears;
Threat answer'd threat, his fury grew,
Headlong to meet the war he flew;
But when the wat'ry death he found,
He thus lamented as he drown'd:

I ne'er

I ne'er had been in this condition,
But for my Mother's prohibition.

The moral of this Fable is very defective, and inculcates a false principle. For, according to the doctrine here laid down, parents ought not to instruct their children, or prohibit them from doing wrong; because, as we are descended from Adam and Eve, that original frailty, which we are supposed to derive from them, may possibly lead us to disobey, for the sake of disobedience, and merely from contradiction. The moral might have been easily improved. The Cock might have observed, that he was deservedly punished for his disobedience, and was drowned for acting contrary to his Mother's good advice, which his duty obliged him to follow.

FABLE 21.

The Rat-catcher and Cats.

THE rats by night such mischief did,
BETTY was ev'ry morning chid:
They undermin'd whole sides of bacon,
Her cheese was sapp'd, her tarts were taken.
Her pasties, fenc'd with thickest paste,
Were all demolish'd, and laid waste.
She curs'd the Cat for want of duty,
Who left her foes a constant booty.

An Engineer, of noted skill,
Engag'd to stop the growing ill.
From room to room he now surveys
Their haunts, their works, their secret ways;
Finds where they 'scape an ambuscade,
And whence the nightly sally's made.

An envious Cat, from place to place,
Unseen, attends his silent pace.
She saw that, if his trade went on,
The purring race must be undone;
So, secretly removes his baits,
And ev'ry stratagem defeats.

Again he sets the poison'd toils,
And Puss again the labour foils.
What foe (to frustrate my designs)
My schemes thus nightly countermines?
Incens'd he cries: this very hour
The wretch shall bleed beneath my power.

So said. A pond'rous trap he brought,
And in the fact poor Puss was caught.

Smuggler, says he, thou shalt be made
A victim to our loss of trade.

The captive Cat, with piteous mews,
For pardon, life, and freedom sues:
A sister of the science spare;

One int'rest is our common care.

What insolence! the man reply'd;
Shall Cats with us the game divide?

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Were all your interloping band
 10 Extinguish'd, or expell'd the land,
 We Rat-catchers might raise our fees,
 Sole guardians of a nation's cheese! 40
 A Cat, who saw the lifted knife,
 Thus spoke, and sav'd her sister's life:
 15 In ev'ry age and clime we see,
 Two of a trade can ne'er agree.
 Each hates his neighbour for encroaching; 45
 'Squire stigmatizes 'squire for poaching;
 Beauties with beauties are in arms,
 20 And scandal pelts each other's charms;
 Kings too their neighbour kings dethrone,
 In hopes to make the world their own. 50
 But let us limit our desires;
 Not war like beauties, kings, and 'squires!
 25 For though we both one prey pursue,
 There's game enough for us and you.

 FABLE 22.

The Goat without a Beard.

35 **T**IS certain that the modish passions
 Descend among the croud like fashions.

Excuse

Excuse me, then, if pride, conceit,
 (The manners of the fair and great) -
 I give to monkeys, asses, dogs,
 Fleas, owls, goats, butterflies, and hogs :
 I say that these are proud ;—what then ?
 I never said they equal men.

A Goat (as vain as Goat can be)
 Affected singularity :
 Whene'er a thymy bank he found,
 He roll'd upon the fragrant ground ;
 And then, with fond attention, stood
 Fix'd o'er his image in the flood.

I hate my frowzy beard, he cries,
 My youth is lost in this disguise ;
 Did not the females know my vigour,
 Well might they loath this rev'rend figure.

Resolv'd to smooth his shaggy face,
 He sought the barber of the place.
 A flippant monkey, spruce and smart,
 Hard by profess'd the dapper art :
 His pole with pewter basons hung,
 Black rotten teeth in order strung,
 Rang'd cups that in the window stood,
 Lin'd with red rags, to look like blood,
 Did well his threefold trade explain,
 Who shav'd, drew teeth, and breath'd a vein.

L. 11. *Thymy bank.* A bank sowed with thyme,

L. 28. *To breathe a vein.* Means to let blood.

The Goat he welcomes with an air,
And seats him in his wooden chair ; 30

5 Mouth, nose, and cheek, the lather hides ;
Light, smooth, and swift the razor glides.

I hope your custom, sir, says Pug ;
Sure never face was half so smug !

10 The Goat, impatient of applause, 35
Swift to the neighb'ring hill withdraws ;

The shaggy people grinn'd and star'd :

Heighday ! what's here ! without a beard !

Say, Brother, whence the dire disgrace ?

What envious hand hath robb'd your face ? 40

11 When thus the fop, with smiles of scorn :
Are beards by civil nations worn ?

Ev'n Muscovites have mow'd their chins ;

Shall we, like formal Capuchins,

Stubborn in pride, retain the mode 45

20 And bear about the hairy load ?

Whene'er we through the village stray,

Are we not mock'd along the way ;

Insulted with loud shouts of scorn,

By boys our beards disgrac'd and torn ? 50

2 Were you no more with goats to dwell,

Brother, I grant you reason well,

L. 43. *Muscovites*, or Russians, whom Peter the Great compelled to shave their beards.

L. 44. *Capuchins*. An order of friars, who shave their heads, and suffer their beards to grow.

Replies

Replies a bearded chief; beside,
 If boys can mortify thy pride,
 How wilt thou stand the ridicule
 Of our whole flock? Affected fool!
 Coxcombs distinguish'd from the rest,
 To all but coxcombs are a jest.

It is a proof of common sense, which, as Pope says, "is fairly
 "worth the seven," to conform to the customs and habits of
 those with whom we live, in all matters which have not an im-
 moral tendency. Those who affect singularity, or who dress or
 act differently from their neighbours in points of little conse-
 quence, deserve, like the Goat without a beard, to be ridiculed
 and shunned.

FABLE 23.

The Old Woman and her Cats.

WHO friendship with a knave hath made,
 Is judg'd a partner in the trade:
 The matron who conducts abroad
 A willing nymph, is thought a bawd;
 And if a modest girl is seen
 With one who cures a lover's spleen,
 We guess her not extremely nice,
 And only wish to know her price.
 'Tis thus, that on the choice of friends
 Our good or evil name depends.

10
 A wrine

A wrinkled Hag, of wicked fame,
Beside a little smoaky flame,
Sat hov'ring, pinch'd with age and frost,
(Her shrivel'd hands, with veins emboss'd)

Upon her knees her weight sustains, 15
While palsy shook her crazy brains :

She mumbles forth her backward pray'rs,
An untam'd scold of fourscore years.

About her swarm'd a num'rous brood
Of Cats, who lank with hunger mew'd. 20

Teaz'd with their cries, her choler grew,
And thus she sputter'd : Hence, ye crew.

Fool that I was, to entertain
Such imps, such fiends, a hellish train !
Had ye been never hous'd and nurs'd, 25
I, for a witch had ne'er been curs'd.

To you I owe, that crouds of boys
Worry me with eternal noise ;
Straws laid across, my pace retard,
'The horse-shoe's nail'd (each threshold's guard) 30

The stunted broom the wenches hide,
For fear that I should up and ride ;
They stick with pins my bleeding seat,
And bid me show my secret teat. 5

To hear you prate would vex a saint ; 35
Who hath more reason of complaint ?
Replies a Cat ; Let's come to proof.

Had we ne'er starv'd beneath your roof,

We

We had, like others of our race,
 In credit liv'd as beasts of chace.
 'Tis infamy to serve a Hag;
 Cats are thought imps, her broom a nag;
 And boys against our lives combine,
 Because, 'tis said, your cats have nine.

However ridiculous the reality of witchcraft, or the power of performing magic arts, by entering into a compact with an evil spirit may appear to us, it was not long ago almost generally believed. King James the First explained the practices of evil spirits, the compacts of witches, their ceremonies, the manner of detecting them, and the justice of punishing them; and in the first year of his reign, the Parliament passed a law, inflicting death on all persons invoking, employing, feeding, or rewarding any evil spirit, whereby any person should be destroyed, consumed, pined or wasted, in any part of his body. In consequence of this severe law, to the terror of old women, who were more particularly marked out as such, witches were discovered in such abundance, that scarcely a village was without one: in one particular place in Lancashire, their number was supposed to be greater than that of the houses; and many innocent persons, distressed with poverty and age, were condemned to death, by legal conviction in the Courts of Justice, and as many more suffered from the credulous fury of the populace.

When Gay wrote his Fables, the belief of witchcraft, though much diminished, still prevailed; and it was not till the year 1735, that the absurd and inhuman laws against witchcraft were repealed. At present, the influence of witches is fortunately confined to Fables and Fairy Tales; and it is in Poetry alone that we hear of

"The night hag, when call'd
 "In secret, riding through the air she comes,
 "Lur'd with the smell of infant blood, to dance
 "With Lapland Witches, while the lab'ring moon
 "Eclipses at their charms."

MILTON's *Paradise Lost*, b. 2. l. 662.

BLACKSTONE's *Commentaries*, b. 4, ch. 4.

And Remarks on *Macbeth*, in STEVENS's edition of *Shakespear*.

FABLE

FABLE 24.

The Butterfly and the Snail.

ALL upstarts, insolent in place,
Remind us of their vulgar race.

As in the sun-shine of the morn,
A Butterfly* (but newly born)
Sat proudly perking on a rose;
With pert conceit his bosom glows;
His wings (all-glorious to behold)
Bedropt with azure, jet, and gold,
W'de he displays; the spangled dew
Reflects his eyes, and various hue.

5

10
His

* No subject in Natural History, is more curious than the metamorphosis, or transformation of animals, from one state to another. There are few children who have not experienced this circumstance, in the rearing of Silkworms; the egg produces a worm; the worm which supplies the silk, is changed into a grub, or chrysalis; the grub into a moth, and the moth, soon after laying its eggs, which perpetuate the species, dies.

The Caterpillar state, is that through which every Butterfly must pass, before it arrives at its perfection and beauty. The change from Caterpillar to Butterfly, was long esteemed a sort of metamorphosis, a real change of one animal into another: but this is by no means the case. The egg of a Butterfly produces a Butterfly, with all the lineaments of its parents; only these are not disclosed at first, but for the greater part of the animal's life, they are covered with a sort of case or muscular coat, in which

His now forgotten friend, a Snail,
 Beneath his house, with slimy trail
 Crawls o'er the grass; whom when he spies,
 In wrath he to the gard'ner cries:

What means yon peasant's daily toil,
 From choaking weeds to rid the soil?
 Why wake you to the morning's care?
 Why with new arts correct the year?
 Why glows the peach with crimson hue?
 And why the plumb's inviting blue?

which are legs for walking, which only suit it in this state; but its mouth takes in nourishment, which is conveyed to the included animal: after a proper time, this covering is thrown off, and the Butterfly, which all the while might be discovered in it, by an accurate observer, with the help of a microscope, appears in its proper form. Before it passes into this change, however, there requires a state of rest for the wings to harden, and the several other parts acquire their proper firmness; this is transacted when the animal lies in what is called the *nymph*, or *chrysalis* state, in appearance only a lump of inanimate matter.

The care of all the Butterfly tribe, to lodge their eggs in safety, is surprising. Those whose eggs are to be hatched in a few weeks, and who are to live in the Caterpillar state, during part of the remaining summer, always lay them on the leaves of such plants as will afford a proper nourishment. On the contrary, those whose eggs are to remain unhatched till the following spring, always lay them on the branches of trees and shrubs, and usually are careful to select such places as are least exposed to the rigour of the ensuing season, frequently covering them from it in an artful manner. Some make a general coat of a hairy matter over them, taking the hairs from their own bodies for that purpose; others hide themselves in hollow places in trees, and in other sheltered cells; and there live in a kind of torpid state during the whole winter, that they may deposit their eggs in the succeeding spring, at a time when there will be no severity of weather for them to combat.

Were

Were they to feast his taste design'd,
That vermin of voracious kind ?
Crush then the slow, the pilf'ring race ;
So purge thy garden from disgrace.

15 What arrogance ! the Snail reply'd ; 25

How insolent is upstart pride !

Hadst thou not thus with insult vain,

Provok'd my patience to complain,

I had conceal'd thy meaner birth,

20 Nor trac'd thee to the scum of earth. 30

For scarce nine suns have wak'd the hours,

To swell the fruit, and paint the flow'rs,

Since I thy humbler life survey'd,

In base, in sordid guise array'd ;

A hideous insect, vile, unclean, 35

You dragg'd a slow and noisome train ;

And from your spider-bowels drew

Foul film, and spun the dirty clue.

I own my humble life, good friend ;

Snail was I born, and Snail shall end. 40

And what's a Butterfly ? at best,

He's but a Caterpillar, drest ;

And all thy race (a numerous seed)

Shall prove of Caterpillar breed.

This Fable exposes, from the example of the Butterfly, a failing, which is the mark of a *narrow*, contracted mind ; an *upstart* pride, which is puffed up with elevation, forgets its low situation, and disdainfully looks down upon former associates. It at the same time commends, from the example of the Snail, that humility, which is not ashamed of its own inferiority.

FABLE 25.

The Scold and the Parrot.

THE husband thus reprov'd his wife:
 Who deals in slander, lives in strife.
 Art thou the herald of disgrace,
 Denouncing war to all thy race?
 Can nothing quell thy thunder's rage,
 Which spares not friend, nor sex, nor age!
 That vixen tongue of your's, my dear,
 Alarms our neighbours far and near.
 Good Gods! 'tis like a rolling river,
 That murmuring flows, and flows for ever!
 Ne'er tir'd, perpetual discord sowing!
 Like fame, it gathers strength by growing.
 Heighday! the flippant tongue replies,
 How solemn is the fool! how wise!
 Is nature's choicest gift debarr'd?
 Nay, frown not; for I will be heard.

L. 10. COWLEY, speaking of a River, says, in imitation of a line in Horace,

"Labitur et labetur, in omne volubilis ævum."

"Which runs, and as it runs for ever, shall run on."

Women

Women of late are finely ridden !

A parrot's privilege forbidden !

You praise his talk, his squalling song ;

But wives are always in the wrong.

20

Now reputations flew in pieces

Of mothers, daughters, aunts, and nieces :

She ran the Parrot's language o'er,

Bawd, huffy, drunkard, flattern, whore ;

On all the sex she vents her fury,

25

Tries and condemns without a jury.

At once the torrent of her words

Alarm'd cat, monkey, dogs, and birds ;

5 All join their forces to confound her ;

Pufs spits, the monkey chatters round her ;

30

The yelping cur her heels assaults ;

The magpye blabs out all her faults ;

Poll, in the uproar, from his cage,

10 With this rebuke out-scream'd her rage :

A Parrot is for talking priz'd,

35

But prattling women are despis'd.

She who attacks another's honour,

Draws every living thing upon her.

15 Think, Madam, when you stretch your lungs,

That all your neighbours too have tongues.

40

One slander must ten thousand get,

The world with int'rest pays the debt.

Retailers of scandal will ever be despised, as it indicates both a weak head and a bad heart, to misconstrue the innocent actions of our neighbours.

FABLE

FABLE 26.

The Cur and the Mastiff.

A SNEAKING Cur, the master's spy,
 Rewarded for his daily lie,
 With secret jealousies and fears,
 Set all together by the ears.
 Poor puss to-day was in disgrace,
 Another cat supply'd her place;
 The hound was beat, the mastiff chid,
 The monkey was the room forbid;
 Each to his dearest friend grew shy,
 And none could tell the reason why.

A plan to rob the house was laid,
 The thief with love seduc'd the maid;
 Cajol'd the Cur, and strok'd his head,
 And bought his secrecy with bread.
 He next the Mastiff's honour try'd,
 Whose honest jaws the bribe defy'd.
 He stretch'd his hand to proffer more,
 The surly dog his fingers tore.

Swift ran the Cur; with indignation,
 The master took his information;

Hang him, the villain's curs'd, he cries;
And round his neck the halter ties,

The Dog his humble suit preferr'd,
And begg'd in justice to be heard.

The master sat; on either hand 25

The cited dogs confronting stand;

The Cur the bloody tale relates,

And, like a lawyer, aggravates.

Judge not unheard, the Mastiff cry'd,

But weigh the cause of either side: 30

Think not that treach'ry can be just,

Take not informers' words on trust;

They ope' their hands to ev'ry pay,

And you and me, by turns betray.

He spoke; and all the truth appear'd, 35

The Cur was hang'd, the Mastiff clear'd.

Liars, like the Cur in this Fable, will always, sooner or later, be discovered and punished. "A false witness," says the wise Author of the Book of Proverbs, "shall not be unpunished, and "he that speaketh lies shall not escape." c. xix. v. 5.

FABLE 27.

The Sick Man and the Angel.

IS there no hope? the sick Man said ;
The silent doctor shook his head,
And took his leave, with sighs of sorrow,
Despairing of his fee to-morrow.

When thus the man, with gasping breath ;
I feel the chilling wound of death ;
Since I must bid the world adieu,
Let me my former life review :
I grant my bargains well were made,
But all men over-reach in trade ;
'Tis self-defence in each profession ;
Sure self-defence is no transgression.
The little portion in my hands,
By good security on lands,
Is well increas'd. If, unawares,
My justice to myself and heirs,
Hath let my debtor rot in jail,
For want of good sufficient bail ;
If I by writ, or bond, or deed,
Reduc'd a family to need,

My will hath made the world amends ;
 My hope on charity depends.
 When I am number'd with the dead,
 And all my pious gifts are read ;
 By heav'n and earth 'twill then be known, 25
 My charities were amply shown.

An Angel came: Ah, friend ! he cry'd,
 No more in flatt'ring hope confide ;
 Can thy good deeds in former times
 Outweigh the balance of thy crimes ? 30
 What widow or what orphan prays
 To crown thy life with length of days ?
 A pious action's in thy pow'r,
 Embrace, with joy, the happy hour :
 Now, while you draw the vital air, 35
 Prove your intention is sincere ;
 This instant give a hundred pound ;
 Your neighbours want, and you abound.

But why such haste ? the sick man whines :
 Who knows as yet what heav'n designs ? 40
 Perhaps I may recover still :
 That sum and more are in my will.

Fool, says the vision, now 'tis plain,
 Your life, your soul, your heav'n was gain ;
 From ev'ry side, with all your might, 45
 You scrap'd, and scrap'd beyond your right ;
 And after death would fain atone,
 By giving what is not your own.

While there is life, there's hope, he cry'd :
Then why such haste? so groan'd and dy'd. 50

The folly of posthumous charities,

“ By dying misers given,

“ To bribe the rage of ill-requited Heaven.”

POPE'S *Eloisa to Abelard*.

Is finely contrasted in an Epitaph in Swindon Church, on Mrs.
Millicent Neate:

The claims to merit from the disposal

Of transitory wealth,

Usually attend the ashes of the dead;

It was her pleasure personally to diffuse,

From a living hand,

The means of happiness to rising generations.

FABLE 28.

The Persian, the Sun, and the Cloud.

IS there a bard whom genius fires,
Whose ev'ry thought the God inspires?
When Envy reads the nervous lines,
She frets, she rails, she raves, she pines;
Her hissing snakes with venom swell;
She calls her venal train from hell;

5

The

The servile fiends her nod obey,
 And all CURL's authors are in pay;
 Fame calls up calumny and spite,
 Thus shadow owes its birth to light. 10

As prostrate to the God of day,
 With heart devout, a Persian lay;
 His invocation thus begun:

Parent of light, all-seeing Sun,
 Prolific beam, whose rays dispense 15
 The various gifts of Providence,

L. 8. *Edmund Curl*. A noted bookseller, much ridiculed by Pope and Swift, and often alluded to in the *Dunciad*; he died in 1747, aged 72.

Gay has, in another part of his works, satirized poor *Curl*:

"Were Prior, Congreve, Swift, and Pope unknown,
 "Poor slander selling *CURL* would be undone."

Yet the memory of Edmund Curl, justly observes the Editor of Bishop Atterbury's Works, has been transmitted to posterity, with an obloquy he ill deserved. Whatever were his demerits, they were amply atoned for, by his indefatigable industry in preserving our national remains: nor did he publish a single volume, but what, amidst a profusion of baser metal, contained some precious ore, some valuable reliques, which future collectors could no where else have found.

Note in the Advertisement to the Works of Bp. ATTERBURY.

L. 12. Many of the antient nations worshipped the Sun as the Supreme Being, but the Persians particularly.

L. 15. *Prolific beam*. Fruitful.

Prior also applies the word in the same sense to the Sun:

"From the middle of the world
 "The sun's prolific rays are hurl'd."

Accept our praise, our daily pray'r,
 Smile on our fields, and blefs the year!
 A Cloud, who mock'd his grateful tongue,
 The day with sudden darknefs hung; 20
 With pride and envy swell'd aloud,
 A voice thus thunder'd from the Cloud:

Weak is this gaudy god of thine,
 Whom I, at will, forbid to shine.
 Shall I nor vows, nor incense know? 25
 Where praise is due, the praise bestow.

With fervent zeal the Persian mov'd,
 Thus the proud calumny reprov'd:
 It was that God who claims my prayer,
 Who gave thee birth, and rais'd thee there; 30
 When o'er his beams the veil is thrown,
 Thy substance is but plainer shown.
 A passing gale, a puff of wind,
 Dispels thy thickest troops combin'd.
 The gale arose; the vapour tost 35
 (The sport of winds) in air was lost;
 The glorious orb the day refines,
 Thus envy breaks, thus merit shines.

L. 30. A cloud is nothing more than a vapour, drawn from the earth by the sun.

L. 38. The moral of this Fable is as just, as the description is sublime: it shews, that true greatness will always shine forth in the midst of the storms of life, and will finally overcome that *base envy*, which, according to the expression of the Poet of Nature,

“ Withereth at another's joy,
 “ And hates that excellence it cannot reach.”

THOMSON'S *Seasons*.

FABLE 29.

The Fox at the Point of Death.

A FOX, in life's extreme decay,
 Weak, sick, and faint, expiring lay;
 All appetite had left his maw,
 And age disarm'd his mumbling jaw.
 His num'rous race around him stand
 To learn their dying fire's command.
 He rais'd his head with whining moan,
 And thus was heard the feeble tone:
 Ah, sons! from evil ways depart:
 My crimes lie heavy on my heart.
 See, see, the murder'd geese appear!
 Why are those bleeding turkeys there?
 Why all around this cackling train,
 Who haunt my ears for chickens slain?
 The hungry Foxes round them star'd,
 And for the promis'd feast prepar'd.
 Where, Sir, is all this dainty cheer?
 Nor turkey, goose, nor hen is here.
 These are the phantoms of your brain,
 And your sons lick their lips in vain.

O gluttons! says the drooping fire,
 Restrain inordinate desire.

Your liqu'rish taste you shall deplore,
 When peace of conscience is no more.

Does not the hound betray our pace?

And gins and guns destroy our race?

Thieves dread the searching eye of pow'r,
 And never feel the quiet hour.

Old age (which few of us shall know)

Now puts a period to my woe.

Would you true happiness attain,

Let honesty your passions rein;

So live in credit and esteem,

And the good name you lost, redeem.

The counsel's good, a Fox replies,

Could we perform what you advise.

Think what our ancestors have done;

A line of thieves from son to son:

To us descends the long disgrace,

And infamy hath mark'd our race.

Though we, like harmless sheep, should feed,

Honest in thought, in word, and deed;

Whatever hen-roost is decreas'd,

We shall be thought to share the feast.

The change shall never be believ'd,

A lost good name is ne'er retriev'd.

Nay, then, replies the feeble Fox,

(But hark! I hear a hen that clocks)

Go,

Go, but be mod'rate in your food;
A chicken too might do me good.

This Fable exposes the fatal consequences of inveterate habit. Whenever any darling sin has taken full possession of our minds, it generally becomes a ruling passion, and accompanies us to the grave. Hypocrity may, on a death bed, affect to condemn; yet a long indulged habit will gain the victory, and lay bare the heart without disguise.

FABLE 30.

The Setting Dog and the Partridge.

THE ranging Dog the stubble tries,
And searches ev'ry breeze that flies;
The scent grows warm; with cautious fear
He creeps, and points the covey near;
The men, in silence far behind,
Conscious of game, the net unbind.

A Partridge, with experience wise,
The fraudulent preparation spies;

She mocks their toils, alarms her brood ;
 The covey springs, and seeks the wood ; 10
 But ere her certain wing she tries,
 Thus to the creeping Spaniel cries :
 Thou fawning slave to man's deceit,
 Thou pimp of lux'ry, sneaking cheat ;
 Of thy whole species thou disgrace, 15
 Dogs should disown thee of their race !
 For, if I judge their native parts,
 They're born with honest open hearts ;
 And, ere they serv'd man's wicked ends,
 We're gen'rous foes, or real friends. 20

When thus the Dog with scornful smile :
 Secure of wing, thou dar'st revile.
 Clowns are to polish'd manners blind,
 How ign'rant is the rustic mind !
 My worth sagacious courtiers see, 25
 And to preferment rise, like me.
 The thriving pimp, who beauty sets,
 Hath oft enhanc'd a nation's debts :
 Friend sets his friend, without regard ;
 And ministers his skill reward, 30
 Thus train'd by man, I learnt his ways,
 And growing favour feasts my days.

I might have guess'd, the Partridge said,
 The place where you were train'd and fed ;
 Servants are apt, and in a trice 35
 Ape to a hair their master's vice.

You

You came from court, you say. Adieu,
She said, and to the covey flew.

L. 35. As inferiors are always too apt to copy their superiors, it is incumbent on persons of exalted stations, to be cautious, lest their example should encourage those below them in acts of folly or wickedness.

—“From folks, whose situation
“Makes them the mark of observation;
“Example oft gives folly rise,
“And imitation clings to vice.”

LLOYD's *Familiar Epistle*. JOHNSON'S POETS,
v. 68, p. 271.

FABLE 31.

The Universal Apparition.

A RAKE, by ev'ry passion rul'd,
With ev'ry vice his youth had cool'd:
Disease his tainted blood affails;
His spirits droop, his vigour fails;

With secret ills at home he pines,
And, like infirm old age, declines. 5

As, twing'd with pain, he pensive sits,
And raves, and prays, and swears by fits;
A ghastly Phantom, lean and wan,
Before him rose, and thus began : 10

My name, perhaps, hath reach'd your ear ;
Attend, and be advis'd by Care.

Nor love, nor honour, wealth, nor pow'r,
Can give the heart a chearful hour,
When health is lost. Be timely wise : 15
With health all taste of pleasure flies.

Thus said, the Phantom disappears.
The wary counsel wak'd his fears :
He now from all excess abstains,
With physick purifies his veins ; 20
And, to procure a sober life,
Resolves to venture on a wife.

But now again the Sprite ascends,
Where'er he walks his ear attends ;
Insinuates that beauty's frail, 25
That perseverance must prevail ;
With jealousies his brain inflames,
And whispers all her lovers' names.
In other hours he represents
His household charge, his annual rents, 30
Increasing debts, perplexing duns,
And nothing for his younger sons.

5 Strait all his thought to gain he turns,
 And with the thirst of lucre burns,
 But when possess'd of fortune's store, 35

The Spectre haunts him more and more ;
 Sets want and misery in view,
 10 Bold thieves, and all the murd'ring crew ;
 Alarms him with eternal frights,
 Infests his dream, or wakes his nights. 40

How shall he chase this hideous guest ?
 Pow'r may perhaps protect his rest.

15 To pow'r he rose. Again the Sprite
 Befets him morning, noon, and night ;

Talks of ambition's tott'ring seat, 45
 How envy persecutes the great ;

Of rival hate, of treach'rous friends,
 20 And what disgrace his fall attends.

The court he quits to fly from care,
 And seeks the peace of rural air : 50

His groves, his fields, amus'd his hours ;
 He prun'd his trees, he rais'd his flowers.

25 But Care again his steps pursues ;
 Warns him of blasts, of blighting dews,

Of plund'ring insects, snails, and rains, 55
 And droughts that starve the labour'd pains.

Abroad, at home, the Spectre's there ;
 30 In vain we seek to fly from Care.

At length he thus the Ghost address'd :
 Since thou must be my constant guest, 60

Be

Be kind and follow me no more;
For Care by right should go before.

This Fable is a plain instructive lecture upon temperance, sobriety, and moderation; and by displaying the evils of a vicious conduct, it recommends the blessings that accompany a virtuous life. It shews, that the man who has passed his younger days in vicious pursuits, and injured his health by intemperance, can have no satisfaction in private or public life: cares and anxieties must ever accompany him; pleasure, wealth, or dominion cannot occupy or fill his mind; he is always dissatisfied with his present situation; he is ever pining for something which he does not possess, and is always haunted by the *spectre*; which is his evil conscience.

FABLE 32.

The two Owls and the Sparrow.

TWO formal Owls together sat,
Conferring thus in solemn chat:
How is the modern taste decay'd!
Where's the respect to wisdom paid?
Our worth the Grecian sages knew;
They gave our fires the honour due;
They weigh'd the dignity of fowls,
And pry'd into the depth of owls.
Athens, the seat of learned fame,
With gen'ral voice rever'd our name;

10
On

On merit, title was conferr'd,
And all ador'd th' Athenian bird.

Brother, you reason well, replies
The solemn mate, with half-shut eyes.

Right. Athens was the seat of learning,
And truly wisdom is discerning.

Besides, on Pallas' helm we fit,
The type and ornament of wit;

But now, alas! we're quite neglected,
And a pert Sparrow's more respected.

20

A Sparrow, who was lodg'd beside,
O'erhears them sooth each other's pride,
And thus he nimbly vents his heat:

Who meets a fool must find conceit.

I grant, you were at Athens grac'd,

25

And on Minerva's helm were plac'd:

But ev'ry bird that wings the sky,

Except an Owl, can tell you why,

From hence they taught their schools to know

How false we judge by outward show:

30

That we should never looks esteem,

Since fools as wise as you might seem.

Would ye contempt and scorn avoid,

Let your vain glory be destroy'd:

L. 12. *Athenian bird.* The Owl was much respected at Athens, as being the favourite bird of Pallas or Minerva, the protectress of the city.

L. 17. The figure of an Owl was usually placed on the helmet of Pallas or Minerva, the Goddess of Wisdom.

Humble

Humble your arrogance of thought, 35
 Pursue the ways by Nature taught;
 So shall you find delicious fare,
 And grateful farmers praise your care;
 So shall sleek mice your chase reward,
 And no keen cat find more regard. 40

FABLE 33.

The Courtier and Proteus.

WHENE'ER a Courtier's out of place,
 The country shelters his disgrace;
 Where, doom'd to exercise and health,
 His house and gardens own his wealth;
 He builds new schemes in hope to gain 5
 The plunder of another reign;
 Like Philip's son would fain be doing,
 And sighs for other realms to ruin.

L. 7. *Philip's son, &c.* Alexander, the son of Philip, King of Macedon, who is said to have *sighed* and shed tears because he had no more realms or worlds to conquer.

See also *Fable* 15, l. 17 to 20, part 2.

“When Philip's son, &c.”

As

35 As one of these (without his wand)
 Pensive, along the winding strand
 Employ'd the solitary hour,
 In projects to regain his pow'r;
 The waves in spreading circles ran;
 40 Proteus arose, and thus began:

Came you from court? For in your mien 15
 A self important air is seen.

He frankly own'd his friends had trick'd him,
 And how he fell his party's victim.

Know, says the God, by matchless skill,
 I change to ev'ry shape at will; 20
 But yet I'm told at court you see
 Those who presume to rival me.

Thus said; a snake with hideous trail,
 Proteus extends his scaly mail.

Know, says the man, though proud in place, 25
 All Courtiers are of reptile race.
 Like you, they take that dreadful form,
 Bask in the sun, and fly the storm;
 5 With malice hiss, with envy glote,
 And, for convenience, change their coat; 30

L 14. *Proteus*. One of the Heathen Deities, the son of Neptune and Phænice: he was endowed with the power of foretelling future events, and could transform himself into any shape. Homer has given an account of his various transformations, in the fourth book of the *Odyssey*; and Virgil, in the fourth book of the *Georgics*.

L 29. *Glote*, or *glout*, means to look fullen.

See also *Fable 24*, l. 27.

With

With new-got lustre rear their head,
Though on a dunghill born and bred.

Sudden the God a lion stands ;
He shakes his mane, he spurns the sands ;
Now a fierce lynx, with fiery glare, 35
A wolf, an ass, a fox, a bear.

Had I ne'er liv'd at court, he cries,
Such transformation might surprise ;
But there, in quest of daily game,
Each able Courtier acts the same. 40

Wolves, lions, linxes, while in place,
Their friends and fellows are their chace.
They play the bear's and fox's part ;
Now rob by force, now steal with art.

They sometimes in the senate bray ; 45
Or, chang'd again to beasts of prey,
Down from the lion to the ape,
Practise the frauds of ev'ry shape.

So said ; upon the God he flies,
In cords the struggling captive ties. 50

Now, Proteus, now, (to truth compell'd)
Speak, and confess thy art excell'd.

Use strength, surprise, or what you will,
The Courtier finds evasions still :

Not to be bound by any ties, 55
And never forc'd to leave his lies.

When it is considered that Gay wrote his Fables by desire of
Queen Caroline, and for the instruction of the Duke of Cumber-
land,

land, it must be confessed, that he cannot be accused of flattery to Courts or Courtiers. On the contrary, he takes every occasion to censure courts, and rail at courtiers; an example of which occurs in this Fable, as well as that of the Setting Dog and the Partridge; a proof of his spirit, at least, it not of his discretion.

FABLE 34.

The Mastiffs.

THOSE who in quarrels interpose,
Must often wipe a bloody nose.

A Mastiff, of true English blood,
Lov'd fighting better than his food.
When dogs were snarling for a bone,
He long'd to make the war his own;
And often found (when two contend)
To interpose obtain'd his end.

He glory'd in his limping pace,
The scars of honour seam'd his face;
In ev'ry limb a gash appears;
And frequent fights retrench'd his ears.

As,

As, on a time, he heard from far,
Two dogs engag'd in noisy war;
Away he scours and lays about him,
Resolv'd no fray should be without him.

Forth from his yard a tanner flies,
And to the bold intruder cries :

A cudgel shall correct your manners;
Whence sprung this cursed hate to tanners?
While on my dog you vent your spite,
Sirrah! 'tis me you dare not bite.
To see the battle thus perplex'd,
With equal rage a butcher vex'd,
Hoarse screaming from the circled crowd,
To the curs'd Mastiff cries aloud :

Both Hockley-Hole and Marybone
The combats of my dog have known.
He ne'er, like bullies, coward-hearted,
Attacks in public, to be parted;
Think not, rash fool, to share his fame:
Be his the honour or the shame.

Thus said; they swore, and rav'd like thunder;
Then dragg'd their fasten'd dogs asunder;
While clubs and kicks from ev'ry side
Rebounded from the Mastiff's hide.

All reeking now with sweat and blood,
Awhile the parted warriors stood;

L. 27. *Hockley-Hole* and *Marybone* were formerly celebrated
places for bull-baiting.

Then

Then pour'd upon the meddling foe,
 Who worried, howl'd, and sprawl'd below. 40
 He rose, and limping from the fray,
 By both sides mangled, sneak'd away.

FABLE 35.

*The Barley-mow and the Dunghill.**

HOW many faucy airs we meet,
 From Temple-bar to Aldgate-street?
 Proud rogues, who shar'd the South-Sea prey,
 And sprung, like mushrooms in a day!

They

* This Fable condemns ingratitude, which Shakespear, in Lear, justly calls a hideous monster, and which Johnson reprobates in no less severe terms:

"No depravity of the mind has been more frequently or justly censured than ingratitude. There is indeed sufficient reason for looking on those that can return evil for good, and repay kindness and assistance with hatred or neglect, as corrupted beyond the common degrees of wickedness; nor will he, who has once been clearly detected in acts of injury to his benefactor, deserve to be numbered among social beings; he has endeavoured to destroy confidence, to intercept sympathy, and to turn every man's attention wholly on himself."

L. 3. *Who shar'd the South-Sea prey.* Gay alludes in this line to

They think it mean to condescend
To know a brother or a friend ;
They blush to hear a mother's name,
And by their pride expose their shame.

As cross his yard, at early day,
A careful farmer took his way ;
He stopp'd, and leaning on his fork,
Observ'd the flail's incessant work.
In thought he measur'd all his store,
His geese, his hogs, he number'd o'er ;
In fancy weigh'd the fleeces shorn,
And multiplied the next year's corn.

A Barley-mow, which stood beside,
Thus to its musing master cried :

Say, good Sir, is it fit or right,
To treat me with neglect and slight ?
Me, who contribute to your cheer,
And raise your mirth with ale and beer ;
Why thus insulted, thus disgrac'd,
And that vile Dunghill near me plac'd ?
Are those poor sweepings of a groom,
That filthy fight, that nauseous fume,

to the South-Sea Company, first established in 1711. The Stock was in such estimation, that it sold in 1720 for more than 1000 per cent. that is, a hundred pounds in stock sold for a thousand pounds in money. But the bubble soon burst, and the Stock fell again below par. Many persons gained, and others lost large fortunes.—Poor Gay himself was a great sufferer.

Meet objects here? Command it hence:

A thing so mean must give offence.

The humble Dunghill thus reply'd,

Thy master hears, and mocks thy pride. 30

Insult not thus the meek and low;

In me thy benefactor know;

My warm assistance gave thee birth,

Or thou hadst perish'd low in earth;

But upstarts, to support their station, 35

Cancel at once all obligation.

FABLE 36.

Pythagoras and the Countryman.

PYTHAG'RAS rose at early dawn,
By soaring meditation drawn,

To

L. 1. *Pythagoras.* A Grecian philosopher. The place and exact time of his birth are uncertain. He is usually supposed to have been born about the 47th Olympiad, or 590 years before Christ; and having settled in Samos, an island in the Archipelago, he is generally esteemed a native of that place. He travelled in quest of knowledge through Phenicia, Chaldea, and India, but

par-

To breathe the fragrance of the day,
 Through flow'ry fields he took his way.
 In musing contemplation warm,
 His steps mislead him to a farm,
 Where, on the ladder's topmost round,
 A Peasant stood ; the hammer's sound
 Shook the weak barn. Say, friend, what care
 Calls for thy honest labour there ? 10

The Clown, with surly voice replies,
 Vengeance aloud for justice cries.
 This Kite, by daily rapine fed,
 My hen's annoy, my turkey's dread :
 At length his forfeit life hath paid ; 15
 See on the wall his wings display'd ;
 Here nail'd, a terror to his kind,
 My fowls shall future safety find ;
 My yard the thriving poultry feed,
 And my barn's refuse fat the breed. 20

Friend, says the Sage, thy doom is wise ;
 For public good the murd'rer dies.

particularly settled for several years in Egypt, where he learned his principal doctrines. Meeting with small encouragement on his return to Samos, he passed over into Italy about the time of Tarquin the Proud, the last King of Rome, and opened a school at a city in the Gulf of Tarentum, in the present kingdom of Naples. He taught the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, or that the souls of men after their decease pass into the bodies of men or animals, and therefore forbade the slaying of animals and the eating of flesh, to which Gay alludes in this Fable.

But

But if these tyrants of the air
Demand a sentence so severe,

5 Think how the glutton man devours ; 25

What bloody feasts regale his hours !

O ! impudence of pow'r and might,

Thus to condemn a hawk or kite ;

When thou, perhaps, carniv'rous finner,

10 Hadst pullets yesterday for dinner ! 30

Hold, cries the Clown, with passion heated,

Shall kites and men alike be treated ?

When heaven the world with creatures stor'd,

Man was ordain'd their sov'reign lord.

15 Thus tyrants boast, the Sage reply'd, 35

Whose murders spring from pow'r and pride.

Own then this manlike kite is slain

Thy greater lux'ry to sustain ;

For* " Petty rogues submit to fate,

20 " That great ones may enjoy their state."

* GARTH'S *Dispensary*.

FABLE 37.

The Farmer's Wife and the Raven.

WHY are those tears? Why droops your head?
 Is then your other husband dead?
 Or does a worse disgrace betide?
 Hath no one since his death apply'd?
 Alas! you know the cause too well:
 The salt is spilt, to me it fell:
 Then, to contribute to my loss,
 My knife and fork were laid across:
 On Friday too! the day I dread;
 Would I were safe at home in bed!
 Last night (I vow to heav'n 'tis true)
 Bounce from the fire a coffin flew;
 Next post some fatal news shall tell,
 God send my Cornish friends be well!
 Unhappy widow, cease thy tears,
 Nor feel affliction in thy fears,
 Let not thy stomach be suspended;
 Eat now, and weep when dinner's ended;

L. 12. *A coffin flew.* It is a vulgar superstition that when a coal bounces from a fire, and seems to bear the shape of a coffin that it predicts the death of some relation or friend.

And

And when the butler clears the table,
For thy desert, I'll read my fable.

20

 Betwixt her swagg'ring pannier's load,
A Farmer's Wife to market rode ;
And jogging on, with thoughtful care,
Summ'd up the profits of her ware ;
When starting from her silver dream,
Thus far and wide was heard her scream :

25

 That Raven on yon left hand oak,
(Curse on his ill-betiding croak)

Bodes me no good. No more she said,

When poor blind Ball, with stumbling tread,

30

Fell prone : o'erturn'd the pannier lay,
And her mash'd eggs bestrow'd the way.

She, sprawling in the yellow road,

Rail'd, swore, and curs'd : Thou croaking toad,

A murrain take thy whoreson throat !

35

I knew misfortune in the note.

 Dame, quoth the Raven, spare your oaths,

Unclench your fist, and wipe your cloaths.

But why on me those curses thrown ?

Goody, the fault was all your own ;

40

For had you laid this brittle ware

On Dun, the old sure-footed mare,

Though all the Ravens of the hundred,

With croaking had your tongue out-thunder'd,

L. 43. *Of the hundred.* Cantons, or districts, into which several of the counties of England are divided.

Sure-footed Dun had kept his legs,
And you, good woman, fav'd your eggs.

45

This Fable ridicules those idle notions which predict sinister events from common occurrences, and that absurd superstition called second-sight. Nothing is more common or unjust than for people to impute their disasters to super-natural causes, which are solely occasioned by their own faults. Thus the Old Woman in the Fable, accuses the Raven of having portended the loss of her *brittle ware* by his croaking, whereas it was owing entirely to her own negligence.

Addison has, in the seventh Paper of the Spectator, ridiculed these superstitious notions with great humour :

" I have known the shooting of a star spoil a night's rest;
" and have seen a man in love grow pale and lose his appetite at
" the plucking of a merry-thought. A screech-owl at midnight
" has alarmed a family more than a band of robbers; nay, the
" voice of a cricket has struck more terror than the roaring of a
" lion. There is nothing so inconsiderable, which may not ap-
" pear dreadful to an imagination that is filled with omens and
" prognostics. A rusty nail, or a crooked pin, shoot up into
" prodigies."

He closes the paper with some beautiful Meral reflections :

" It is the chief concern of wise men to retrench the evils of
" life by the reasonings of philosophy; so it is the employment
" of fools to multiply them by the sentiments of superstition.

" For my own part, I should be very much troubled were I
" endowed with this divining quality, though it should inform
" me truly of every thing that should befall me. I would not an-
" ticipate the relish of any happiness, nor feel the weight of any
" misery, before it actually arrives.

" I know but one way of fortifying my soul against these
" gloomy presages of mind; and that is, by securing to myself
" the friendship and protection of that Being who disposes of
" events, and governs futurity.—Though I know neither the
" time nor the nature of the death I am to die, I am not at all
" solicitous about it, because I am sure that he knows both, and
" that he will not fail to comfort and support me under them."

FABLE

FABLE 38.

*The Turkey and the Ant.*

IN other men we faults can spy,
And blame the mote that dims their eye:
Each little speck and blemish find,
To our own stronger errors blind.

A Turkey, tir'd of common food,
Forsook the barn, and fought the wood;
Behind her ran an infant train,
Collecting here and there a grain.
Draw near, my birds, the mother cries,
This hill delicious fare supplies;

5

10

Gay, in using the word *mote*, or small particle of matter, certainly alludes to that passage in the Scripture, *Matt. vii. v. 3, 4.*

"And why beholdest thou the *mote* that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye.

"Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the *mote* out of thine eye; and behold a beam that is in thine own eye?"

"Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

F 3

Behold

Behold the busy negro race,
 See millions blacken all the place.
 Fear not: like me with freedom eat;
 An Ant is most delightful meat.
 How blest'd, how envy'd were our life,
 Could we but 'scape the poult'rer's knife!
 But man, curs'd man, on Turkies preys,
 And Christmas shortens all our days.
 Sometimes with oysters we combine,
 Sometimes assist the fav'ry chine:
 From the low peasant to the lord,
 The Turkey smokes on ev'ry board;
 Sure men for gluttony are curs'd,
 Of the sev'n deadly sins the worst.
 An Ant, who climb'd beyond her reach,
 Thus answer'd from the neighb'ring beech:
 Ere you remark another's sin,
 Bid thy own conscience look within;
 Controul thy more voracious bill,
 Nor for a breakfast nations kill.

L. II. *Negro race.* The Ants, so called from their dark colour.

The moral of this Fable is most excellent. It is founded on the first principles of reason and morality, not to be severe in condemning others for faults which we ourselves commit.

FABLE 39.

The Father and Jupiter.

15
20
T HE Man to Jove his suit preferr'd ;
He begg'd a wife ; his prayer was heard.
Jove wonder'd at his bold addressing :
For how precarious is the blessing.

25
A wife he takes ; and now for heirs
Again he worries heaven with prayers.
Jove nods assent. Two hopeful boys
And a fine girl reward his joys.

Now more solicitous he grew,
And set their future lives in view ;
He saw that all respect and duty
Were paid to wealth, to power, and beauty.

Once more, he cries, accept my prayer ;
Make my lov'd progeny thy care.
Let my first hope, my fav'rite boy,
All fortune's richest gifts enjoy.
My next with strong ambition fire ;
May favor teach him to aspire ;

Till he the step of power ascend,
 And courtiers to their idol bend.
 With ev'ry grace, with ev'ry charm,
 My daughter's perfect features arm.
 If Heav'n approve, a Father's blest'd :
 Jove smiles, and grants his full request.

20

The first, a miser at the heart,
 Studious of ev'ry griping art,
 Heaps hoards on hoards, with anxious pain ;
 And all his life devotes to gain.
 He feels no joy, his cares increase,
 He neither wakes nor sleeps in peace ;
 In fancy'd want (a wretch compleat)
 He starves, and yet he dares not eat.

25

The next to sudden honours grew :
 The thriving art of courts he knew :
 He reach'd the height of pow'r and place ;
 Then fell, the victim of disgrace.

30

35

Beauty with early bloom supplies
 His daughter's cheek, and points her eyes.
 The vain coquette each suit disdains,
 And glories in her lover's pains.
 With age she fades, each lover flies,
 Contemn'd, forlorn, she pines and dies.

40

When Jove the Father's grief survey'd,
 And heard him heav'n and fate upbraid,
 Thus spoke the God : By outward show,
 Men judge of happiness and woe :

45

Shall

Shall ignorance of good and ill
 Dare to direct th' eternal will?
 Seek virtue; and, of that possest,
 To Providence resign the rest.

50

Providence has assigned to every creature its station, lot, make, and figure; and it proves no less folly than wickedness, not to be satisfied with his appointments, and to presume to direct the works of Almighty wisdom. We should well consider what we wish for, lest in obtaining it, we repent. They who humbly resign themselves in all events to the good pleasure of Providence, and are principally anxious to obey his commands, and live a virtuous life, are most happy in themselves, and succeed best in the world.

The vanity of human wishes ridiculed in this Fable, is finely displayed in the tenth Satire of Juvenal, of which Dr. Johnson has given so excellent a translation, or rather imitation.

FABLE 40.

The Two Monkeys.

THE learned, full of inward pride,
 The fops of outward show deride;
 The Fop, with learning at defiance,
 Scoffs at the pedant and the science:

F 5

The

The Don, a formal solemn strutter, 5
 Despises Monsieur's air and flutter :
 While Monsieur mocks the formal fool,
 Who looks, and speaks, and walks by rule.
 Britain, a medley of the twain,
 As pert as France, as grave as Spain ; 10
 In fancy wiser than the rest,
 Laughs at them both, of both the jest.
 Is not the poet's chiming close
 Censur'd by all the sons of prose ?
 While bards of quick imagination 15
 Despise the sleepy prose narration.
 Men laugh at apes, they men contemn :
 For what are we but apes to them ?

Two Monkies went to Southwark fair,
 No critics had a sourer air : 20
 They forc'd their way through draggled folks,
 Who gap'd to catch Jack-Pudding's jokes ;
 Then took their tickets for the show,
 And got, by chance, the foremost row.
 To see their grave, observing face, 25
 Provok'd a laugh through all the place.

Bro-

L. 5. *The Don*. A Spaniard, because Don is a common title in Spain, prefixed to the names of persons of great family; as Lord is in England.

L. 7. *Monsieur*. The Frenchman.

L. 22. *Jack Pudding*. Or the Merry Andrew, who usually
at-

5 Brother, says Pug, and turn'd his head,
The rabble's monstrously ill-bred.

Now through the booth loud hisses ran;
Nor ended till the show began. 30

The tumbler whirls the flip-flap round,

10 With Somersets he shakes the ground;

The cord beneath the dancer springs;

Aloft in air the vaulter swings;

Distorted now, now prone depends, 35

Now through his twisted arms ascends:

15 The crowd, in wonder and delight,

With clapping hands applaud the sight.

With smiles, quoth Pug, if pranks like these

The giant apes of reason please, 40

How would they wonder at our arts;

20 They must adore us for our parts.

High on the twig I've seen you cling;

Play, twist, and turn in airy ring:

attends a Mountebank at fairs and wakes, and who is also mentioned by Gay in his sixth Pastoral, l. 83.

25 "The mountebank now treads the stage, and sells

"His pills, his balsams, and his ague spells;

0- "Now o'er and o'er the nimble tumbler springs;

"And on the rope the ventrous maiden swings,

"*Jack Pudding* in his party-coloured jacket

"Tosses the glove, and jokes at ev'ry packet.

L. 31. *Flip-flap*. A kind of rattle:

L. 32. *Somersets*. Thus explained in Johnson, "A leap by which a jumper throws himself from a height, and turns over his head."

How can those clumsy things like me, 45
 Fly with a bound from tree to tree?
 But yet, by this applause, we find
 These emulators of our kind
 Discern our worth, our parts regard,
 Who our mean mimics thus reward. 50

Brother, the grinning Mate replies,
 In this I grant that man is wise.
 While good example they pursue,
 We must allow some praise is due;
 But when they strain beyond their guide, 55
 I laugh to scorn the mimic pride.
 For how fantastic is the sight,
 To meet men always bolt upright,
 Because we sometimes walk on two!
 I hate the imitating crew. 60

FABLE 41.

==
The Owl and the Farmer.
 ==

AN Owl of grave deport and mien,
 Who (like the Turk) was seldom seen,

Within

45 Within a barn had chose his station,
 As fit for prey and contemplation.
 Upon a beam aloft he sits, 5
 And nods, and seems to think by fits.
 So have I seen a man of news,
 50 Or Post-boy, or Gazette peruse;
 Smoke, nod, and talk, with voice profound,
 And fix the fate of Europe round. 10
 Sheav's pil'd on sheaves hid all the floor;
 At dawn of morn, to view his store
 55 The Farmer came. The hooting guest
 His self-importance thus exprest:
 Reason in man is mere pretence: 15
 How weak, how shallow is his sense!
 To treat with scorn the Bird of Night,
 Declares his folly, or his spite.
 Then, too, how partial is his praise!
 The lark's, the linnet's chirping lays 20
 To his ill-judging ears are fine,
 And nightingales are all divine.
 But the more knowing feather'd race
 See wisdom stamp'd upon my face.

L. 8. *Post-Boy*. Formerly the name of a newspaper.

Gay, in another work couples the *Post-boy* and the *Gazette* together:

"A party late at Cambray met,
 "Which drew all Europe's eyes,
 "'Twas called in *Post-boy* and *Gazette*
 "The Quadruple allies."

Ballad on Quadrille, JOHNSON'S POETS, v. 36, p. 275.

When-

Whene'er to visit light I deign, 25
 What flocks of fowl compose my train !
 Like slaves they croud my flight behind,
 And own me of superior kind.

The Farmer laugh'd, and thus reply'd :
 Thou dull important lump of pride ; 30
 Dar'ft thou with that harsh grating tongue,
 Depreciate birds of warbling song ?
 Indulge thy spleen. Know men and fowl
 Regard thee, as thou art—an Owl.
 Besides, proud Blockhead, be not vain 35
 Of what thou call'ft thy slaves and train.
 Few follow wisdom or her rules ;
 Fools in derision follow fools.

FABLE 42.

The Jugglers.

A JUGGLER long through all the town,
 Had rais'd his fortune and renown ;

You'd

25 You'd think (so far his art transcends)
The devil at his fingers' ends.

Vice heard his fame, she read his bill; 5
Convinc'd of his inferior skill,
She sought his booth, and from the crowd
30 Defied the man of art aloud.

Is this then he so fam'd for flight?
Can this slow bungler cheat your fight? 10
Dares he with me dispute the prize?
I leave it to impartial eyes.

35 Provok'd, the Juggler cried, 'Tis done.
In science I submit to none.

Thus said. The cups and balls he play'd; 15
By turns, this here, that there, convey'd.
The cards obedient to his words,
Are by a fillip turn'd to birds.

His little boxes change the grain:
Trick after trick deludes the train. 20
He shakes his bag, he shews all fair;
His fingers spread, and nothing there;
Then bids it rain with showers of gold,
And now his iv'ry eggs are told.

But when from thence the hen he draws, 25
Amaz'd spectators hum applause.

Vice now step'd forth, and took the place
With all the forms of his grimace.

This magic looking-glass, she cries,
(There hand it round) will charm your eyes. 30

Each

Each eager eye the sight desir'd,
And ev'ry man himself admir'd.

Next, to a senator address'ing;
See this bank-note; observe the blessing;
Breathe on the Bill. Heigh, pass! 'Tis gone, 35
Upon his lips a padlock shone.
A second puff the magic broke;
The padlock vanish'd, and he spoke.

Twelve bottles rang'd upon the board,
All full, with heady liquor stor'd, 40
By clean conveyance disappear,
And now two bloody swords are there.

A purse she to a thief expos'd;
At once his ready fingers clos'd.
He opes his fist, the treasure's fled; 45
He sees an halter in its stead.

She bids ambition hold a wand;
He grasps a hatchet in his hand.

A box of charity she shows;
Blow here; and a church-warden blows, 50
'Tis vanish'd with conveyance neat,
And on the table smokes a treat.

She shakes the dice, the board she knocks,
And from all pockets fills her box.

She next a meagre rake address. 55
This Picture see; her shape, her breast!
What youth, and what inviting eyes!
Hold her, and have her. With surprise,

His

His hand expos'd a box of pills,
And a loud laugh proclaim'd his ills. 60

A counter, in a miser's hand,
Grew twenty guineas at command.

35 She bids his heir the sum retain,
And 'tis a counter now again.

A guinea with her touch you see 65
Take ev'ry shape, but charity;

40 And not one thing you saw, or drew,
But chang'd from what was first in view.

The juggler now in grief of heart,
With this submission own'd her art: 70

Can I such matchless slight withstand!
How practice hath improv'd your hand!

45 But now and then I cheat the throng;
You ev'ry day, and all day long.

50 This fable is both original and moral. It shews the fascinating power of vice to deceive mankind by false appearances of pleasure and happiness, which ultimately end in detection or misery. The corruption of the senator, and the fraud of the churchwarden are detected. The miser and spendthrift equally suffer want. The rake finds disease in the gratification of his licentious passion. The ambitious statesman, who aims at exorbitant power, terminates his life on the scaffold. The thief, instead of enjoying ill-gotten wealth, dies on the gallows; and drunkenness not unfrequently leads to contentions and murder. Thus, all who are allured by the hopes of pleasure or profit to act wickedly, find misery instead of expected happiness, and receive punishment from the fatal consequences of their own vices.

FABLE 43.

The Council of Horses.

UPON a time a neighing Steed,
 Who graz'd among a num'rous breed,
 With mutiny had fir'd the train,
 And spread dissention through the plain.
 On matters that concern'd the state 5
 The council met in grand debate.
 A Colt, whose eye-balls flam'd with ire,
 Elate with strength and youthful fire,
 In haste stept forth before the rest,
 And thus the list'ning throng address: 10
 Good gods! how abject is our race!
 Condemn'd to slav'ry and disgrace!
 Shall we our servitude retain,
 Because our fires have borne the chain?
 Consider, friends, your strength and might, 15
 'Tis conquest to assert your right.
 How cumb'rous is the gilded coach!
 The pride of man is our reproach.
 Were we design'd for daily toil,
 To drag the plough-share through the soil? 20

To

To sweat in harness through the road ?

To groan beneath the carrier's load ?

How feeble are the two-legg'd kind !

What force is in our nerves combin'd !

Shall then our nobler jaws submit

25

To foam and champ the galling bit.

Shall haughty man my back bestride ?

Shall the sharp spur provoke my side ?

Forbid it, heav'ns ! reject the rein ;

Your shame, your infamy disdain.

30

Let him the Lion first controul,

And still the Tyger's famish'd growl !

5 Let us, like them, our freedom claim ?

And make him tremble at our name.

A general nod approv'd the cause,

35

And all the circle neigh'd applause,

When lo ! with grave and solemn pace,

10 A Steed advanc'd before the race,

With age and long experience wise ;

Around he casts his thoughtful eyes,

40

And, to the murmurs of the train,

Thus spoke the Nestor of the plain :

15 When I had health and strength, like you,

The toils of servitude I knew.

L. 42. *The Nestor of the plain.* The oldest horse, from *Nestor*, King of Pylos, a Grecian hero, and the oldest warrior at the siege of Troy. He is said to have lived three ages ; and his eloquence was so great, that Homer describes his words, as dropping from his lips like honey.

Now

Now grateful man rewards my pains, 45
 And gives me all these wide domains.
 At will I crop the year's increase;
 My latter life is rest and peace.
 I grant to man we lend our pains,
 And aid him to correct the plains. 50
 But doth not he divide the care,
 Through all the labours of the year?
 How many thousand structures rise,
 To fence us from inclement skies!
 For us he bears the sultry day, 55
 And stores up all our winter's hay.
 He sows, he reaps the harvest's gain;
 We share the toil, and share the grain.
 Since ev'ry creature was decreed
 To aid each other's mutual need; 60
 Appease your discontented mind,
 And act the part by heav'n assign'd.
 The tumult ceas'd. The Colt submitted;
 And, like his ancestors, was bitted.

This Fable enjoins us not to repine at the dispensations of Providence, but to be contented in our respective situations; to act in the best manner we are able, the part *assigned to us by Heaven*, and not to give way to discontent, which the Author of the *Night Thoughts* justly calls

“Incurable consumption of our peace.”

Night 7, l. 30.

FABLE

FABLE 44.

The Hound and the Huntsman.

IMPERTINENCE at first is born
 With heedless flight, or smiles of scorn;
 Teaz'd into wrath, what patience bears
 The noisy fool who perseveres?

The morning wakes, the Huntsman sounds, 5
 At once rush forth the joyful hounds:
 They seek the wood with eager pace,
 Through bush, through briar explore the chace.
 Now scatter'd wide, they try the plain,
 And snuff the dewy turf in vain. 10
 What care, what industry, what pains!
 What universal silence reigns.

Ringwood, a Dog of little fame,
 Young, pert, and ignorant of game,
 At once displays his babbling throat; 15
 The pack, regardless of the note,
 Pursue the scent; with louder strain
 He still persists to vex the train.

The Huntsman to the clamor flies;
 The smacking lash he smartly plies. 20
 His

His ribs all welk'd, with howling tone
The puppy thus express'd his moan :

I know the music of my tongue
Long since the pack with envy stung.
What will not spite ? These bitter smarts
I owe to my superior parts. 25

When puppies prate, the Huntsman cry'd,
They show both ignorance and pride :
Fools may our scorn, our envy raise,
For envy is a kind of praise. 30
Had not thy forward noisy tongue
Proclaim'd thee always in the wrong,
Thou might'st have mingled with the rest,
And ne'er thy foolish nose confest.
But fools, to talking ever prone, 35
Are sure to make their follies known.

L. 21. *Welks*. Means those lumps or wales, which the application of a whip leaves upon the skin ; it is still used in that sense in some of the Northern counties.

It is observed, by a Commentator on *Æsop's Fables*, that
"much tongue and much judgment seldom go together, for talking and thinking are two quite differing faculties."

L'ESTRANGE'S *ÆSOP*, v. I, p. 234.

And Prior has told us, in his *Alma* :

"And 'tis remarkable, that they
"Talk most, who have the least to say."

FABLE 45.

The Poet and the Rose.

I HATE the man who builds his name
On ruins of another's fame.

Thus prudes, by characters o'erthrown,
Imagine that they raise their own.

Thus Scriblers, covetous of praise,

5

Think slander can transplant the bays.

Beauties and bards have equal pride,

With both all rivals are decry'd.

Who praises LESBIA's eyes and feature,

Must call her sister, awkward creature ;

10

For the kind flatt'ry's sure to charm,

When we some other nymph disarm.

As in the cool of early day

A Poet sought the sweets of May,

The garden's fragrant breath ascends,

15

And ev'ry stalk with odour bends.

A Rose he pluck'd, he gaz'd, admir'd,

Thus singing, as the Muse inspir'd :

Go

Go Rose, my CHLOE's bosom grace;
 How happy should I prove,
 Might I supply that envy'd place
 With never fading love!
 There, Phoenix-like, beneath her eye,
 Involv'd in fragrance, burn and die!

Know, hapless flow'r, that thou shalt find
 More fragrant roses there;
 I see thy with'ring head reclin'd
 With envy and despair!
 One common fate we both must prove;
 You die with envy, I with love.

L. 23. *Phoenix-like.* Gay alludes to the fabulous story of the Phoenix. The ancients spoke of this bird as single, or the only one of its kind; they described it as

"A god-like bird! whose endless round of years
 "Out-lasts the stars and tires the circling spheres;
 "Not us'd, like vulgar birds, to eat its fill,
 "Or drink the chrystal of the murmuring rill;
 "But fed with warmth from Titan's purer ray,
 "And slak'd by streams which eastern seas convey;
 "Still he renews his life in these abodes,
 "Contemns the pow'r of fate, and mates the gods.
 "His fiery eyes shot forth a glitt'ring ray,
 "And round his head ten thousand glories play;
 "High on his head a star celestial bright,
 "Divides the darkness with its piercing light;
 "His legs are stain'd with purple's lively dye,
 "His azure wings the fleeting winds outfly,
 "Soft plumes of cheerful blue his limbs unfold,
 "Enriched with spangles, and bedropt with gold."

TICKELL's *Description of the Phoenix, from Claudian.*

Spare your comparisons, reply'd

An angry Rose, who grew beside;
Of all mankind, you should not flout us;

What can a Poet do without us?

In ev'ry love-song roses bloom;

35

We lend you colour and perfume.

Does it to CHLOE's charms conduce,

To sound her praise on our abuse?

Must we, to flatter her, be made

To wither, envy, pine, and fade?

40

This Bird, at the conclusion of a long term of years, was supposed to burn itself on a pile of sweet wood and aromatic gums, and to fire it with the wafting of its wings; and from its ashes was said to arise a young Phœnix. The new birth of the young bird is thus described by the same Poet:

"Th' enliv'ning dust its head begins to rear,

"And on the ashes sprouting plumes appear;

"In the dead bird reviving vigour reigns,

"And life returning revels in its veins:

"A new-born Phœnix starting from the flame,

"Obtains at once a son's and father's name;

"And the great change of double life displays,

"In the short moment of one transient blaze."

FABLE 46.

The Cur, the Horse, and the Shepherd's Dog.

THE lad, of all-sufficient merit,
 With modesty ne'er damps his spirit;
 Presuming on his own deserts,
 On all alike his tongue exerts;
 His noisy jokes at random throws,
 And pertly spatters friends and foes.
 In wit and war the bully race
 Contribute to their own disgrace:
 Too late the forward youth shall find
 That jokes are sometimes paid in kind;
 Or, if they canker in the breast,
 He makes a foe who makes a jest.

A Village Cur, of snappish race,
 The pertest puppy in the place,
 Imagin'd that his treble throat
 Was blest with music's sweetest note;
 In the mid road he basking lay,
 The yelping nuisance of the way;
 For not a creature pass'd along,
 But had a sample of his song.

20
 Soon

Soon as the trotting steed he hears,
 He starts, he cocks his dapper ears;
 Away he scow'rs, assaults his hoof;
 Now near him snarls, now barks aloof;
 With shrill impertinence attends; 25
 Nor leaves him till the village ends.

It chanc'd upon his evil day,
 A Pad came pacing down the way;
 The Cur, with never-ceasing tongue,
 Upon the passing trav'ller sprung. 30

The Horse, from scorn provok'd to ire,
 Flung backward; rolling in the mire,
 5 The Puppy howl'd, and bleeding lay;
 The Pad in peace pursu'd his way.

A Shepherd's Dog, who saw the deed, 35
 Detesting the vexatious breed,

10 Bespoke him thus: When coxcombs prate,
 They kindle wrath, contempt, or hate;
 Thy teasing tongue had judgment ty'd,
 Thou hadst not, like a Puppy, dy'd. 40

15 A Bully and a Coward are synonymous terms; and the man
 who wantonly provokes the wrath of another, will generally meet
 with a fate similar to the Puppy, and be crushed.

FABLE 47.

The Court of Death.

DEATH, on a solemn night of state,
In all his pomp of terror sate :
Th' attendants of his gloomy reign,
Diseases dire, a ghastly train !
Croud the vast Court. With hollow tone,
A voice thus thunder'd from the throne :

This night our Minister we name,
Let ev'ry servant speak his claim ;
Merit shall bear this ebon wand,
All, at the word, stretch'd for their hand.

Fever, with burning heat possesst,
Advanc'd, and for the wand address :

I to the weekly bills appeal,
Let those express my fervent zeal ;
On ev'ry slight occasion near,
With violence I persevere.

Next Gout appears with limping pace,
Pleads how he shifts from place to place ;
From head to foot how swift he flies,
And ev'ry joint and sinew plies ;

Still working when he seems supprest,
A most tenacious stubborn guest.

A haggard Spectre from the crew
Crawls forth, and thus asserts his due :

'Tis I who taint the sweetest joy, 25

And in the shape of love destroy :

My thanks, sunk eyes, and noseless face,
Prove my pretensions to the place.

Stone urg'd his ever-growing force ;

And, next, Consumption's meagre corse, 30

With feeble voice, that scarce was heard,
Broke with short coughs, his suit preferr'd :

Let none object my ling'ring way,

I gain, like *FABIUS*, by delay ;

Fatigue and weaken ev'ry foe 35

By long attack, secure, though slow.

Plague represents his rapid pow'r,
Who thinn'd a nation in an hour.

All spoke their claim, and hop'd the wand.

Now expectation hush'd the band ; 40

When thus the Monarch from the throne :

Merit was ever modest known.

L. 34. *Like Fabius, by delay.* Quintus *FABIUS* Maximus, a celebrated Roman General, saved the Roman Republic by his prudent and cautious conduct, in not giving battle to Hannibal, the Carthaginian General, who having led his forces over the Alps into Italy, had defeated the Romans in three engagements.

What, no Physician speak his right !
 None here ! but fees their toils requite.
 Let then Intemp'rance take the wand,
 Who fills with gold their zealous hand.
 You, Fever, Gout, and all the rest,
 (Whom wary men, as foes, detest)
 Forego your claims ; no more pretend :
 Intemp'rance is esteem'd a friend ;
 He shares their mirth, their social joys,
 And, as a courted guest, destroys.
 The charge on him must justly fall,
 Who finds employment for you all.

FABLE 48.

The Gardener and the Hog.

A GARD'NER, of peculiar taste,
 On a young Hog his favour plac'd ;
 Who fed not with the common herd ;
 His tray was to the hall preferr'd ;

He

He wallow'd underneath the board, 5

Or in his master's chamber snor'd ;

45 Who fondly strok'd him ev'ry day,

And taught him all the puppy's play.

Where'er he went, the grunting friend

Ne'er fail'd his pleasure to attend. 10

As on a time, the loving pair

50 Walk'd forth to tend the garden's care,

The Master thus address'd the Swine :

My house, my garden, all is thine.

On turnips feast whene'er you please, 15

And riot in my beans and pease ;

If the potatoe's taste delights,

Or the red carrot's sweet invites,

Indulge thy morn and evening hours,

But let due care regard my flow'rs : 20

My tulips are my garden's pride,

What vast expence those beds supply'd !

The Hog by chance one morning roam'd,

Where with new ale the vessels foam'd,

He munches now the steaming grains, 25

Now with full swill the liquor drains.

Intoxicating fumes arise ;

He reels, he rolls his winking eyes ;

Then stagg'ring through the garden scours,

And treads down painted ranks of flowers. 30

With delving snout he turns the soil,

And cools his palate with the spoil.

He

The Master came, the ruin spy'd,
Villain, suspend thy rage, he cry'd.
Hast thou, thou most ungrateful sot, 35
My charge, my only charge forgot?
What, all my flowers! No more he said,
But gaz'd, and sigh'd, and hung his head.

The Hog with stutt'ring speech returns:
Explain, Sir, why your anger burns? 40
See there, untouch'd your tulips strown,
For I devour'd the roots alone.

At this the Gard'ner's passion grows;
From oaths and threats he fell to blows.
The stubborn brute the blows sustains; 45
Assaults his leg, and tears the veins.

Ah, foolish Swain! too late you find
That sties were for such friends design'd!

Homeward he limps with painful pace,
Reflecting thus on past disgrace: 50
Who cherishes a brutal mate
Shall mourn the folly soon or late.

This Fable warns the inexperienced not to form improper intimacies with brutal characters; as brutality will burst forth, how long soever it may have lain dormant.

FABLE 49.

The Man and the Flea.

35
40 **W**HETHER on earth, in air, or main,
Sure ev'ry thing alive is vain!

Does not the hawk all fowls survey,
As destin'd only for his prey;
And do not tyrants, prouder things,

45 Think men were born for slaves to kings?

When the crab views the pearly strands,
Or TAGUS, bright with golden sands;
Or crawls beside the coral grove,
And hears the ocean roll above;

50 Nature is too profuse, says he,
Who gave all these to pleasure me!

When bord'ring pinks and roses bloom,
And ev'ry garden breathes perfume,

L. 7. *Pearly strands.* The beds of oysters in the Eastern seas, in which the *pearls* are contained and fished for.

L. 8. *Tagus bright with golden sands.* A river in ancient Lusitania, now called the Tayo, on whose banks Lisbon is situated, supposed to abound in gold dust.

Rowe, in his *Ode on the King's Birth-day*, 1718, had said before Gay,

"And Tagus bright in sands of gold."

G 5

When

When peaches glow with funny dyes,
 Like LAURA's cheek, when blushes rise;
 When with huge figs the branches bend,
 When clusters from the vine depend;
 The snail looks round on flow'r and tree,
 And cries, all these were made for me!

15

What dignity's in human nature!
 Says Man, the most conceited creature,
 As from a cliff he cast his eye,
 And view'd the sea and arched sky:
 The sun was sunk beneath the main;
 The moon and all the starry train,
 Hung the vast vault of heav'n. The Man
 His contemplation thus began:

20

When I behold this glorious show,
 And the wide wat'ry world below,
 The scaly people of the main,
 The beasts that range the wood or plain,
 The wing'd inhabitants of air,
 The day, the night, the various year;
 And know all these by heav'n design'd
 As gifts to pleasure human kind;
 I cannot raise my worth too high;
 Of what vast consequence am I!

25

30

35

Not of th' importance you suppose,
 Replies a Flea upon his nose.
 Be humble, learn thyself to scan;
 Know, pride was never made for Man.

40

'Tis

'Tis vanity that swells thy mind.
 What, heav'n and earth for thee design'd!
 For thee, made only for our need, 45
 That more important Fleas might feed.

All the parts of creation are dependent on each other: and man, by being endowed with reason, may be considered as the first of God's creatures. Yet even he can have no plea for pride, when he reflects, that he cannot protract his existence for a single moment, beyond the appointed hour, and that his body becomes a prey to worms.

FABLE 50.

*The Hare and many Friends.**

FRIENDSHIP, like love, is but a name,
 Unless to one you stint the flame:
 The child whom many father's share,
 Hath seldom known a fathers care.
 'Tis thus in friendships; who depend 5
 On many, rarely find a friend.

A Hare, who in a civil way,
 Comply'd with every thing like GAY,

Was known by all the bestial train
 Who haunt the wood or graze the plain. 10
 Her care was never to offend,
 And ev'ry creature was her friend.

As forth she went at early dawn,
 To taste the dew-besprinkled lawn,
 Behind she hears the hunter's cries, 15
 And from the deep-mouth'd thunder flies.
 She starts, she stops, she pants for breath;
 She hears the near advance of death;
 She doubles to mislead the hound,
 And measures back her mazy round; 20
 'Till fainting in the public way,
 Half dead with fear, she gasping lay.
 What transport in her bosom grew,
 When first the Horse appear'd in view!

Let me, says she, your back ascend, 25
 And owe my safety to a friend;
 You know my feet betray my flight,
 To friendship ev'ry burden's light.

The Horse replied, Poor honest Pufs,
 It grieves my heart to see thee thus. 30
 Be comforted, relief is near;
 For all your friends are in the rear.

She next the stately Bull implor'd,
 And thus replied the mighty lord:
 Since ev'ry beast alive can tell, 35
 That I sincerely wish you well,

I may

10 I may, without offence, pretend
To take the freedom of a friend.

Love calls me hence; a fav'rite cow
Expects me near yon barley-mow; 40
And when a lady's in the case,
You know all other things give place.
15 To leave you thus might seem unkind;
But see, the Goat is just behind.

The Goat remark'd her pulse was high, 45
Her languid head, her heavy eye;
My back, says he, may do you harm,
20 The Sheep's at hand, and wool is warm.

The Sheep was feeble, and complain'd
His sides a load of wool sustain'd : 50
Said he was slow, confess'd his fears;
For hounds eat Sheep as well as Hares.

25 She now the trotting Calf address'd,
To save from death a friend distress'd.

Shall I, says he, of tender age, 55
In this important care engage?

Older and abler pass you by;
30 How strong are those! how weak am I!
Should I presume to bear you hence,
Those friends of mine may take offence. 60

Excuse me then, you know my heart :
But dearest friends, alas ! must part.

35
How

How shall we all lament ! Adieu,
For see the hounds are just in view.

This Fable is the most natural and delightful of the whole set, and it is the most interesting, because Gay designed himself under the character of the *Hare*. For no man was ever more beloved, no man had more friends, and yet no man ever gained less by them than poor Gay:—Hence Pope says of him,

“ Gay dies unpensioned with a *hundred friends*.”

And Swift, in allusion to this Fable,

“ Thus Gay, the *Hare with many Friends*,

“ Twice seven long years the Court attends,

“ Who under tales-conveying truth,

“ To virtue form'd a princely youth.”



END OF THE FIRST PART.

FABLES,

BY

JOHN GAY.



PART THE SECOND.

F. A. B. E. S.

JOHN GAY

CLASS THE SECOND

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TO THE

FIRST EDITION.

THESE Fables were finished by Mr. GAY, and intended for the press, a short time before his death; when they were left, with his other papers, to the care of his noble friend and patron the Duke of Queensberry. His Grace has accordingly committed them to the press, and they are here printed, from the originals, in the Author's own hand-writing. We hope they will please equally with his former Fables, though mostly on subjects of a graver and more political turn. They will certainly shew him to have been (what he esteemed the best character) a man of a truly honest heart, and a sincere lover of his country.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

NEW EDITION.



January 1, 1800.

THE Fables of the Second Part, which were not printed till after the Author's death, are far inferior, in simplicity and beauty, to the Fables of the First Part. They were written when his mind was soured with disappointment against the Court and Sir Robert Walpole, and are principally political, with long introductions.

Hence there is less variety in these Fables: they principally treat on corruption, fraud, extortion, ambition, jobs, insincerity, flattery, bad management of public affairs, neglect of good men, and the patronage of bad men; the common topics
of

of abuse heaped upon Sir Robert Walpole, though without naming him, whom he considered, perhaps unjustly, as the author of his disappointment.

Thus the Vulture who was Minister of State to the Lion, and who maintained that place by corruption; the Baboon who defrauded the Poultry of their Corn; the Ant in Office, who plundered the public hoard; the Jackall who gained partisans by bribes; and the Degenerate Bee; the Bear in the Boat; and the 'Squire and his Cur; are all but a repetition of the same abuse.

Of the sixteen, which form the Second Part, only five or six Fables can be excepted from this general reflection; of these, the Countryman and Jupiter; the Cook-Maid, the Ox, and the Turn-spit; the Pack-horse and the Carrier; the Ravens, the Sexton, and the Earth-worm, are not inferior to any of the First Part, and convey a most excellent moral.

FABLES,

FABLES,
PART THE SECOND.

FABLE 1.

==
The Dog and the Fox.
==

TO A LAWYER.

I KNOW you Lawyers can, with ease,
Twist words and meanings as you please;
That language, by your skill made pliant,
Will bend to favour ev'ry client;
That 'tis the fee directs the sense, 5
To make out either side's pretence.
When you peruse the clearest case,
You see it with a double face.
For scepticism's your profession;
You hold there's doubt in all expression. 10

L. 9. *Scepticism.* From the Greek word *σκηπτις*, to doubt.

Hence

Hence is the bar with fees supplied.
 Hence eloquence takes either side.
 Your hand would have but paltry gleanings,
 Could ev'ry man express his meaning.
 Who dares presume to pen a deed,
 Unless you previously are fee'd?
 'Tis drawn; and, to augment the cost,
 In dull prolixity engross'd.
 And now we're well secur'd by law,
 'Till the next brother finds a flaw.

15

Read o'er a will. Was't ever known,
 But you could make the will your own;
 For when you read, 'tis with intent
 To find out meanings never meant.
 Since things are thus, *se defendendo*,
 I bar fallacious inuendo.

20

25

Sagacious PORTA's skill could trace
 Some beast or bird in ev'ry face.

L. 24. "And find in Homer what was never there."—POPE.

L. 25, 26. Law expressions. *Se defendendo*, to speak in his own defence, or to be advocate in his own cause.

I bar fallacious inuendo, means, I except deceitful insinuations.

L. 27. *Sagacious Porta*. John Baptista Porta, a native of Naples, was born in 1546, and rendered himself famous by his researches and discoveries in mathematics and medicine, and particularly for his knowledge of the occult sciences. He wrote many books on magic and astrology; but the work to which Gay alludes, was on physiognomy, in which he affected to trace, in the features of the human face, a resemblance to animals, and to delineate from such whimsical resemblance, corresponding qualities of the mind. He died at Naples, in 1615, in his 70th year.

NICERON'S *Hommes Illustres*, v. 43.

The

The head, the eye, the nose's shape,
Prov'd this an owl, and that an ape. 30

When in the sketches thus design'd,
Resemblance brings some friend to mind,

You shew the piece and give the hint,
And find each feature in the print:

So monstrous like the portrait's found, 35
All know it, and the laugh goes round.

Like him I draw from gen'ral nature;
Is't I or you then fix the satire?

So Sir, I beg you spare your pains
In making comments on my strains. 40

All private slander I detest,
I judge not of my neighbour's breast:

Party and prejudice I hate,
And write no libels on the state.

Shall not my fable censure vice, 45
Because a knave is over nice?

And least the guilty hear and dread,
Shall not the decalogue be read?

If I lash vice in gen'ral fiction,
Is't I apply, or self conviction? 50

L. 45, 46. Gay has introduced a similar sentiment in the
Beggar's Opera:

When you censure the age,
Be cautious and sage,
Left the courtiers offended should be:
If you mention vice or bribe,
'Tis so pat to all the tribe;
Each cries,—That was levell'd at me.

Brutes

Brutes are my theme. Am I to blame,
If men in morals are the same?

I no man call an ape or afs,

'Tis his own conscience holds the glass:

Thus void of all offence I write;

Who claims this fable knows his right.

A shepherd's Dog, unskill'd in sports,

Pick'd up acquaintance of all sorts.

Among the rest, a Fox he knew,

By frequent chat their friendship grew.

Says Reynard, 'Tis a cruel case,

That man should stigmatize our race:

No doubt, among us rogues you find,

As among dogs and human kind;

And yet, unknown to me and you,

There may be honest men and true.

Thus slander tries whate'er it can,

To put us on the foot with man.

Let my own actions recommend;

No prejudice can blind a friend:

You know me free from all disguise;

My honour as my life I prize.

By talk like this, from all mistrust

The dog was cur'd, and thought him just.

As on a time the Fox held forth,

On conscience, honesty, and worth;

Sudden he stopp'd, he cock'd his ear;

Low dropp'd his brushy tail with fear.

Bless us! the hunters are abroad,
What's all that clatter on the road? 80

Hold, says the Dog, we're safe from harm;
'Twas nothing but a false alarm.

At yonder town 'tis market day,
55 Some farmer's wife is on the way;
'Tis so, (I know her pye-bald mare) 85
Dame Dobbins, with her poultry-ware.

Reynard grew huff. Says he, This sneer
From you I little thought to hear.
60 Your meaning in your looks I see,
Pray what's Dame Dobbins, friend, to me? 90
Did I e'er make her poultry thinner?
Prove that I owe the Dame a dinner.

Friend, quoth the Cur, I meant no harm;
65 Then why so captious? Why so warm?
My words in common acceptation, 95
Could never give this provocation.
No lamb, for ought I ever knew,
May be more innocent than you.

70 At this gall'd Reynard winch'd and swore
Such language ne'er was giv'n before. 100

What's lamb to me? the saucy hint
Shews me, base knave, which way you squint.
If t'other night your master lost
75 Three lambs, am I to pay the cost?
Your vile reflections would imply 105
That I'm the thief: You Dog, you lie.

Bless H Thou

Thou knave, thou fool, the Dog reply'd,
 The name is just, take either side ;
 Thy guilt these applications speak ;
 Sirrah, 'tis conscience makes you squeak. 110
 So saying, on the Fox he flies ;
 The self-convicted felon dies.

FABLE 2.

The Vulture, the Sparrow, and other Birds.

TO A FRIEND IN THE COUNTRY.

ERE I begin, I must premise,
 Our ministers are good and wise ;
 So, though malicious tongues apply,
 Pray what care they, or what care I ?
 If I am free with courts, be't known, 5
 I ne'er presume to mean our own.
 If general morals seem to joke
 On ministers, and such-like folk,
 A captious fool may take offence ;
 What then ? he knows his own pretence. 10

I med-

I meddle with no state-affairs,
But spare my jest to save my ears.
Our present schemes are too profound,
For MACHIAVEL himself to sound:
To censure 'em I've no pretension;
I own they're past my comprehension.

You say, your brother wants a place,
('Tis many a younger brother's case)

L. 14. *Machiavel*. Nicholas Machiavel, descended from a noble family, was born at Florence, in 1469. His first compositions were of the comic kind; he wrote a Comedy called *Nicias*, on the model of Aristophanes, a composition in which he satyriized several of his countrymen, under theatrical characters. This Play was acted with so much applause at Florence, that Pope Leo the 10th, the great patron of Literature, ordered it to be performed at Rome. But his comic writing would never have raised him to the eminence which he enjoyed. He was secretary, and afterwards historiographer to the Republic of Florence; and he distinguished himself principally as an historian and politician. He wrote the *History of Florence*, from 1215 to 1494; and a *Discourse on Livy the Roman Historian*, which is replete with excellent observations and political reflections. But the book to which Gay alludes, is his *Prince*, a treatise of politics, in which he describes, under the character of Cæsar Borgia, the arts of government, as they are too often practised by wicked princes and tyrants. Hence *Machiavelism*, or the art of governing tyrannically and deceitfully, are synonymous expressions; a profound and refined politician is called a *Machiavel*. He died in 1530.

See also *Fable 5*, l. 45. *The self-deem'd Machiavel*.

In his *Rural Sports*, Gay also uses *Machiavel* for a politician:

"Each rival *Machiavel* with envy burns,
"And honesty forsakes them all by turns."

And that he very soon intends
To ply the court, and tease his friends. 20
If there his merits chance to find
A Patriot, of an open mind,
Whose constant actions prove him just
To both a king's and people's trust;
May he with gratitude attend, 25
And owe his rise to such a friend.

You praise his parts, for bus'ness fit,
His learning, probity, and wit;
But those alone will never do,
Unless his patron have 'em too. 30

I've heard of times (pray God defend us!)
We're not so good but he can mend us)
When wicked ministers have trod
On kings and people, law, and God;
With arrogance they girt the throne, 35
And knew no int'rest but their own.
Then virtue, from preferment barr'd,
Gets nothing but its own reward.
A gang of petty knaves attend 'em,
With proper parts to recommend 'em. 40
Then if his patron burn with lust,
The first in favour's pimp the first.
His doors are never clos'd to spies,
Who cheer his heart with double lies:
They flatter him, his foes defame, 45
So lull the pangs of guilt and shame.

If

If schemes of lucre haunt his brain,
 Projectors swell his greedy train;
 Vile brokers ply his private ear
 With jobs of plunder for the year; 50
 All consciences must bend and ply;
 You must vote on, and not know why:
 Through thick and thin you must go on;
 One scruple, and your place is gone.
 Since plagues like these have curst a land, 55
 And fav'rites cannot always stand;
 Good courtiers should for change be ready,
 And not have principles too steady:
 For should a knave engross the pow'r,
 (God shield the realm from that sad hour) 60
 He must have rogues, or slavish fools;
 For what's a knave without his tools?
 Wherever those a people drain,
 And strut with infamy and gain;
 I envy not their guilt and state, 65
 And scorn to share the public hate.
 Let their own servile creatures rise
 By screening fraud, and venting lies;
 Give me, kind heav'n, a private station,*
 A mind serene for contemplation: 70

* ———— "When impious men bear sway,
 "The post of honor is a private station."

ADDISON.

Title and profit I resign;
 The post of honour shall be mine.
 My Fable read, their merits view,
 Then herd who will with such a crew.

In days of yore (my cautious rhymes 75
 Always except the present times)
 A greedy Vulture, skill'd in game,
 Inur'd to guilt, unaw'd by shame,
 Approach'd the throne in evil hour,
 And step by step intrudes to pow'r: 80
 When at the royal eagle's ear,
 He longs to ease the monarch's care.
 The monarch grants. With pride elate,
 Behold him minister of state!
 Around him throng the feather'd rout; 85
 Friends must be serv'd, and some must out.
 Each thinks his own the best pretension;
 This asks a place, and that a pension.

The nightingale was set aside,
 A forward daw his room supply'd. 90
 This bird (says he) for bus'ness fit,
 Hath both sagacity and wit.
 With all his turns, and shifts, and tricks,
 He's docile, and at nothing sticks.
 Then with his neighbours, one so free 95
 At all times will connive at me.

The hawk had due distinction shown,
 For parts and talents like his own.

Thou-

Thousands of hireling cocks attend him,
As blust'ring bullies, to defend him.

109

At once the ravens were discarded,
And magpies with their posts rewarded.

Those fowls of omen I detest,
That pry into another's nest;
State lies must lose all good intent;
For they foresee and croak th' event.

105

My friends ne'er think, but talk by rote,
Speak what they're taught, and so to vote.

When rogues like these (a sparrow cries)
To honours and employments rise,
I court no favour, ask no place;
For such preferment is disgrace.
Within my thatch'd retreat I find
(What these ne'er feel) true peace of mind.

110

FABLE 3.

The Baboon and the Poultry.

TO A LEVEE HUNTER.

WE frequently misplace esteem,
 By judging men by what they seem.
 To birth, wealth, pow'r, we should allow
 Precedence, and our lowest bow.
 In that is due distinction shown,
 Esteem is virtue's right alone.

With partial eye we're apt to see
 The man of noble pedigree.
 We're prepossess'd, my lord inherits,
 In some degree, his grandfire's merits ;
 For those we find upon record,
 But find him nothing but my lord.

When we, with superficial view,
 Gaze on the rich, we're dazzled too.
 We know that wealth, well understood,
 Hath frequent pow'r of doing good :
 Then fancy that the thing is done,
 As if the pow'r and will were one.
 Thus oft the cheated croud adore
 The thriving knaves that keep 'em poor.

20
The

The cringing train of pow'r survey;
 What creatures are so low as they!
 With what obsequiousness they bend!
 To what vile actions condescend!
 Their rise is on their meanness built, 25
 And flatt'ry is their smallest guilt.
 What homage, rev'rence, adoration,
 In ev'ry age, in ev'ry nation,
 Have sycophants to power address'd!
 No matter who the pow'r possess'd. 30
 Let ministers be what they will,
 You find their levees always fill.
 Ev'n those who have perplex'd a state,
 Whose actions claim contempt and hate,
 Had wretches to applaud their schemes, 35
 Though more absurd than madmens' dreams.
 When barb'rous MOLOCH was invok'd,
 The blood of infants only smok'd!

L. 37. *Moloch*, the principal idol of the Ammonites. It was hollow, and a fire was kindled within to heat the image, that it might burn the offerings. Parents were accustomed to offer up their children as sacrifices, and while the infant was expiring, drums were beat to drown its cries.

To these horrid sacrifices, *smoking with the blood of infants*, Milton finely alludes:

- "First Moloch, horrid king, besmear'd with blood
- "Of human sacrifice and parent's tears,
- "Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,
- "Their childrens' cries unheard that pass'd through fire
- "To his grim idol."

Paradise Lost, b. 1, l. 392.

But here (unless all hist'ry lies)
 Whole realms have been a sacrifice
 Look through all courts. 'Tis pow'r we find,
 The gen'ral idol of mankind
 There worshipp'd under ev'ry shape;
 Alike the lion, fox, and ape,
 Are follow'd by time-serving slaves,
 Rich prostitutes, and needy knaves.

Who, then, shall glory in his post?
 How frail his pride, how vain his boast!
 The followers of his prosp'rous hours
 Are as unstable as his pow'r.
 Pow'r, by the breath of flatt'ry nurst,
 The more it swells, is nearer burst.
 The bubble breaks, the gewgaw ends,
 And in a dirty tear descends.

Once on a time, an ancient maid,
 By wishes and by time decay'd,
 To cure the pangs of restless thought,
 In birds and beasts amusements sought:
 Dogs, parrots, apes, her hours employ'd;
 With these alone she talk'd and toy'd.

A huge Baboon her fancy took,
 (Almost a man in size and look)
 He finger'd every thing he found,
 And mimick'd all the servants round.
 Then, too, his parts and ready wit
 Shew'd him for ev'ry business fit.

With

With all these talents 'twas but just
 That Pug should hold a place of trust :
 So to her fav'rite was assign'd
 The charge of all her feather'd kind. 70
 'Twas his to tend 'em eve and morn,
 And portion out their daily corn.

Behold him now, with haughty stride,
 Assume a ministerial pride.

The morning rose. In hope of picking, 75

Swans, turkies, peacocks, ducks, and chicken,

Fowls of all ranks surround his hut,

To worship his important strut.

The minister appears. The croud,

Now here, now there, obsequious bow'd. 80

This prais'd his parts, and that his face,

T' other his dignity in place.

From bill to bill the flatt'ry ran ;

He hears and bears it like a man :

For, when we flatter self-conceit, 85

We but his sentiments repeat.

If we're too scrupulously just,

What profit's in a place of trust ?

The common practice of the great:

Is, to secure a snug retreat. 90

So Pug began to turn his brain

(Like other folks in place) on gain.

An apple-woman's stall was near,

Well stock'd with fruits through all the year ;

Here ev'ry day he cramm'd his guts, 95
 Hence were his hoards of pears and nuts;
 For 'twas agreed (in way of trade)
 His payments should in corn be made.
 The stock of grain was quickly spent,
 And no account which way it went. 100
 Then, too, the poultry's starv'd condition
 Caus'd speculations of suspicion.
 The facts were prov'd beyond dispute;
 Pug must refund his hoards of fruit:
 And, though then minister in chief, 105
 Was branded as a public thief;
 Disgrac'd, despis'd, confin'd to chains,
 He nothing but his pride retains.

A Goose pass'd by; he knew the face,
 Seen ev'ry levee while in place. 110

What, no respect! no rev'rence shown;
 How saucy are these creatures grown!
 Not two days since (says he) you bow'd
 The lowest of my fawning crowd.

Proud fool, (replies the Goose) 'tis true, 115
 Thy corn a flutt'ring levee drew!
 For that I join'd the hungry train,
 And sold thee flatt'ry for thy grain.
 But then, as now, conceited Ape,
 We saw thee in thy proper shape. 120

FABLE 4.

The Ant in Office.

TO A FRIEND.

YOU tell me that you apprehend
 My verse may touchy folks offend.
 In prudence too you think my rhymes
 Should never squint at courtiers' crimes:
 For though nor this, nor that it meant,
 Can we another's thoughts prevent?

You ask me if I ever knew
 Court chaplains thus the lawn pursue?
 I meddle not with gown or lawn;
 Poets, I grant, to rise must fawn.
 They know great ears are over-nice,
 And never shock their patron's vice.
 But I this hackney path despise;
 'Tis my ambition not to rise.
 If I must prostitute the muse,
 The base conditions I refuse.

I neither flatter nor defame,
 Yet own I would bring guilt to shame:

IF

If I corruption's hand expose,
 I make corrupted men my foes : 20
 What then ? I hate the paltry tribe,
 Be virtue mine, be theirs the bribe.
 I no man's property invade,
 Corruption's yet no lawful trade.
 Nor would it mighty ills produce, 25
 Could I shame brib'ry out of use :
 I know 'twould cramp most politicians,
 Were they ty'd down to these conditions.
 'Twould stint their pow'r, their riches bound,
 And make their parts seem less profound. 30
 Were they deny'd their proper tools,
 How could they lead their knaves and fools ?
 Were this the case, let's take a view,
 What dreadful mischiefs would ensue ;
 Though it might aggrandize the state, 35
 Could private luxury dine on plate ?
 Kings might indeed their friends reward,
 But ministers find less regard.
 Informers, sycophants, and spies,
 Would not augment the year's supplies. 40
 Perhaps, too, take away this prop,
 An annual job or two might drop.
 Besides, if pensions were deny'd,
 Could avarice support its pride ?
 It might e'en ministers confound, 45
 And yet the state be safe and sound.

I care

I care not, though 'tis understood,
 I only mean my country's good :
 And (let who will my freedom blame)
 I wish all courtiers did the same. 50
 Nay, though some folks the less might get,
 I wish the nation out of debt.
 I put no private man's ambition
 With public good in competition :
 Rather than have our law defac'd, 55
 I'd vote a minister disgrac'd.

I strike at vice, be't where it will;
 And what, if great folks take it ill ?
 I hope corruption, brib'ry, pension,
 One may with detestation mention ? 60
 Think you the law (let who will take it)
 Can *scandalum magnatum* make it ?
 I vent no slander, owe no grudge,
 Nor of another's conscience judge :
 At him or him I take no aim, 65
 Yet dare against all vice declaim.
 Shall I not censure breach of trust,
 Because knaves know themselves unjust ?

L. 62. *Scandalum magnatum*, means a slander on peers or other great men of the realm; words spoken in derogation of a peer, judge, or other great officers of the realm, being held to be more heinous than if spoken against other men, and subject to peculiar punishments, by divers antient statutes.

That

That steward, whose account is clear,
 Demands his honour may appear : 70
 His actions never shun the light,
 He is, and would be prov'd upright.

But then you think my Fable bears
 Allusion, too, to state affairs.

I grant it does : and who's so great, 75
 That has the privilege to cheat ?
 If, then, in any future reign,
 (For ministers may thirst for gain)
 Corrupted hands defraud the nation,
 I bar no reader's application. 80

An Ant there was, whose forward prate
 Controul'd all matters in debate ;
 Whether he knew the thing or no,
 His tongue eternally would go ;
 For he had impudence at will, 85
 And boasted universal skill.
 Ambition was his point in view ;
 Thus, by degrees, to pow'r he grew.
 Behold him now his drift attain :
 He's made chief treas'rer of the grain. 90

But as their antient laws are just,
 And punish breach of public trust,
 'Tis ordered (lest wrong application
 Should starve that wise industrious nation)
 That all accounts be stated clear, 95
 Their stock, and what defray'd the year :

That

That auditors should these inspect,
 And public rapine thus be check'd.
 For this the solemn day was set,
 The auditors in counsel met.
 The gran'ry keeper must explain,
 And balance his account of grain.
 He brought (since he could not refuse 'em)
 Some scraps of paper to amuse 'em.

An honest Pismire, warm with zeal,
 In justice to the public weal,
 Thus spoke: The nation's hoard is low,
 From whence does this profusion flow?
 I know our annual funds' amount,
 Why such expence, and where's th' account?

With wonted arrogance and pride,
 The Ant in Office thus reply'd:
 Consider, Sirs, were secrets told,
 How could the best-schem'd projects hold?
 Should we state-mysteries disclose,
 'Twould lay us open to our foes.
 My duty and my well-known zeal,
 Bid me our present schemes conceal.
 But, on my honour all th' expence
 (Though vast) was for the swarm's defence.

They pass'd the account as fair and just,
 And voted him implicit trust.

Next year again the gran'ry drain'd,
 He thus his innocence maintain'd:

Think

Think how our present matters stand, 125
 What dangers threat from ev'ry hand!
 What hosts of turkies stroll for food,
 No farmer's wife but hath her brood.
 Consider, when invasion's near,
 Intelligence must cost us dear: 130
 And, in this ticklish situation,
 A secret told betrays the nation.
 But, on my honour, all the expence
 (Though vast) was for the swarm's defence.

Again, without examination, 135
 They thank'd his sage administration.

The year revolves. The treasure spent,
 Again in secret service went.
 His honour too again was pledg'd,
 To satisfy the charge all'dg'd. 140

When thus, with panic shame possess'd,
 An auditor his friends address'd:
 What are we? Ministerial tools!

We little knaves are greater fools.
 At last this secret is explor'd; 145
 'Tis our corruption thins the hoard:
 For ev'ry grain we touch'd, at least,
 A thousand his own heaps increas'd;
 Then, for his kin and fav'rite spies,
 A hundred hardly could suffice. 150
 Thus, for a paltry, sneaking bribe,
 We cheat ourselves, and all the tribe;

125 For all the magazine contains,
Grows from our annual toil and pains.
They vote th' account shall be inspected; 155
The cunning plund'rer is detected;
The fraud is sentenc'd; and his hoard,
130 As due, to public use restor'd.

FABLE 5.

The Bear in a Boat.

TO A COXCOMB.

140 **T**HAT man must daily wiser grow,
Whose search is bent himself to know;
145 Impartially he weighs his scope,
And on firm reason founds his hope.
He tries his strength before the race; 5
And never seeks his own disgrace;
He knows the compass, sail, and oar,
150 Or never launches from the shore;
Before he builds, computes the cost;
And in no proud pursuit is lost: 10

For He

He learns the bounds of human sense,
 And safely walks within the fence.
 Thus, conscious of his own defect,
 Are pride and self-importance check'd.

If, then, self-knowledge to pursue,
 Direct our life in ev'ry view,
 Of all the fools that pride can boast,
 A Coxcomb claims distinction most.

Coxcombs are of all ranks and kind;
 They're not to sex or age confin'd,
 Or rich, or poor, or great, or small;
 And vanity besets 'em all.
 By ignorance is pride increas'd:
 Those most assume who know the least;
 Their own false balance gives 'em weight,
 But ev'ry other finds 'em light.

Not that all Coxcombs' follies strike,
 And draw our ridicule alike;
 To diff'rent merits each pretends,
 This in love-vanity transcends;
 That smitten with his face and shape,
 By dress distinguishes the ape;
 T' other with learning crams his self,
 Knows books, and all things but himself.

All these are fools of low condition,
 Compar'd with Coxcombs of ambition.
 For those puff'd up with flatt'ry, dare
 Assume a nation's various care.

They

They ne'er the grossest praise mistrust,
 Their sycophants seem hardly just; 40
 For these, in part alone, attest
 The flatt'ry their own thoughts suggest.
 In this wide sphere a Coxcomb's shown
 15 In other realms beside his own;
 The self-deem'd MACHIAVEL at large 45
 By turns controuls in ev'ry charge.
 Does commerce suffer in her rights?
 Tis he directs the naval flights.
 20 What sailor dares dispute his skill?
 He'll be an adm'ral when he will. 50
 Now meddling in the foldier's trade,
 Troops must be hir'd, and levies made.
 He gives ambassadors their cue,
 25 His cobbled treaties to renew;
 And annual taxes must suffice 55
 The current blunders to disguise.
 When his crude schemes in air are lost,
 And millions scarce defray the cost,
 30 His arrogance (nought undismay'd)
 Trusting in self-sufficient aid, 60
 On other rocks misguides the realm,
 And thinks a pilot at the helm.
 He ne'er suspects his want of skill,
 35 But blunders on from ill to ill;
 And, when he fails of all intent, 65
 Blames only unforeseen event.

Left

They

Left you mistake the application,
The Fable calls me to relation.

A Bear of shag and manners rough,
At climbing trees expert enough;
For dext'rously, and safe from harm,
Year after year he robb'd the swarm;
Thus thriving on industrious toil,
He glory'd in his pilfer'd spoil.

This trick so swell'd him with conceit,
He thought no enterprize too great.
Alike in sciences and arts,
He boasted universal parts;
Pragmatic, busy, bustling, bold,
His arrogance was uncontroll'd:
And thus he made his party good,
And grew dictator of the wood.

The beasts with admiration stare,
And think him a prodigious Bear.
Were any common booty got,
'Twas his each portion to allot:
For why, he found there might be picking,
Ev'n in the carving of a chicken.
Intruding thus, he by degrees
Claim'd too the butcher's larger fees,
And now his over-weening pride
In ev'ry province will preside.
No task too difficult was found:
His blund'ring nose misleads the hound.

In stratagem and subtle arts, 95
He over-rules the fox's parts.

It chanc'd as, on a certain day,
70 Along the bank he took his way,
A Boat, with rudder, sail, and oar,
At anchor floated near the shore. 100

He stopt; and, turning to his train,
Thus pertly vents his vaunting strain:

75 What blund'ring puppies are mankind!
In ev'ry science always blind!

I mock the pedantry of schools: 105
What are their compasses and rules?

From me that helm shall conduct learn,
80 And man his ignorance discern.

So saying, with audacious pride,
He gains the boat, and climbs the side. 110

The beasts, astonish'd, lin'd the strand,
The anchor's weigh'd, he drives from land:

85 The slack sail shifts from side to side;
The boat untrim'd admits the tide;
Born down, adrift, at random tost, 115
His oar breaks short, the rudder's lost.

The Bear, presuming in his skill,
90 Is here and there officious still;

Till, striking on the dang'rous sands,
Aground the shatter'd vessel stands. 120

To see the bungler thus distrest,
The very fishes sneer and jest.

Ev'n

Ev'n gudgeons join in ridicule,
 To mortify the meddling fool.
 The clam'rous watermen appear;
 Threats, curses, oaths, insult his ear:
 Seiz'd, thrash'd, and chain'd, he's dragg'd to land;
 Derision shouts along the strand.

The old proverb of *Ne sutor ultra crepidam*, "Let not the
 "cobler go beyond his last," is applicable to this Fable. The fate
 of the Bear in the Boat, is a warning against presumption; and
 instructs us not to attempt things for which we are unfit, lest
 we meet with ridicule, where we expected applause.

FABLE 6.

The 'Squire and his Cur.

TO A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.

THE man of pure and simple heart,
 Thro' life disdains a double part.
 He never needs the screen of lies
 His inward bosom to disguise.
 In vain malicious tongues assail;
 Let envy snarl, let slander rail,

From

From virtue's shield (secure from wound)

Their blunted, venom'd shafts rebound.

So shines his light before mankind ;

His actions prove his honest mind.

If in his country's cause he rise,

Debating senates to advise,

Unbrib'd, unaw'd, he dares impart

The honest dictates of his heart :

No ministerial frown he fears,

But in his virtue perseveres.

But would you play the politician,

Whose heart's averse to intuition ?

Your lips at all times, nay, your reason,

Must be controul'd by place and season.

What statesman could his pow'r support,

Were lying tongues forbid the court ?

Did princely ears to truth attend,

What minister could gain his end ?

How could he raise his tools to place,

And how his honest foes disgrace ?

That politician tops his part,

Who readily can lie with art :

The man's proficient in his trade ;

His pow'r is strong, his fortune's made.

By that the int'rest of the throne

Is made subservient to his own :

By that have kings of old, deluded,

All their own friends for his excluded.

By that, his selfish schemes pursuing, 35
He thrives upon the public ruin.

ANTIOCHUS, with hardy pace,
Provok'd the dangers of the chace :
And, lost, from all his menial train,
Travers'd the wood and pathless plain. 40

A cottage lodg'd the royal guest !
The PARTHIAN clown brought forth his best.
The king, unknown, his feast enjoy'd,
And various chat the hours employ'd.
From wine what sudden friendship springs ! 45
Frankly they talk'd of courts and kings.

We country-folks (the clown replies)
Cou'd ope our gracious monarch's eyes.
The king, (as all our neighbours say)
Might he (God bless him) have his way ; 50
Is found at heart, and means our good,
And he would do it, if he cou'd.
If truth in courts were not forbid,
Nor kings, nor subjects would be rid.
Were he in power we need not doubt him : 55
But that transferr'd to those about him,
On them he throws the regal cares ;
And what mind they ? Their own affairs.
If such rapacious hands he trust,
The best of men may seem unjust. 60

L. 37. *Antiochus*. The Story is related by Plutarch, the celebrated Greek biographer.

From

35 From kings to coblers 'tis the same :
 Bad servants wound their master's fame.
 In this our neighbours all agree :
 Would the king knew as much as we.
 Here he stopt short. Repose they sought, 65
 40 The peasant slept, the monarch thought.
 The courtiers learn'd, at early dawn,
 Where their lost sovereign was withdrawn.
 The guards' approach our host alarms,
 With gaudy coats the cottage swarms. 70
 45 The crown and purple robes they bring,
 And prostrate fall before the king.
 The clown was call'd : the royal guest
 By due reward his thanks exprest.
 The king, then, turning to the crowd, 75
 50 Who fawningly before him bow'd,
 Thus spoke : Since, bent on private gain,
 Your counsels first misled my reign,
 Taught and inform'd by you alone,
 No truth the royal ear hath known, 80
 55 Till here conversing. Hence, ye crew,
 For now I know myself and you.
 Whene'er the royal ear's ingross,
 State-lies but little genius cost.
 The fav'rite then securely robs, 85
 60 And gleans a nation by his jobs.
 Franker and bolder grows in ill,
 He daily poisons dares instil ;

And, as his present views suggest,
 Inflames or sooths the royal breast. 90
 Thus wicked ministers oppress,
 When oft the monarch means redress.

Would kings their private subjects hear,
 A minister must talk with fear.
 If honesty oppos'd his views, 95
 He dare not innocence accuse.

'Twould keep him in such narrow bound,
 He could not right and wrong confound.
 Happy were kings, could they disclose
 Their real friends, and real foes! 100

Were both themselves and subjects known,
 A monarch's will might be his own.
 Had he the use of ears and eyes,
 Knaves would no more be counted wise.
 But then a minister might lose 105

(Hard case!) his own ambitious views.
 When such as these have vex'd a state,
 Pursu'd by universal hate,
 Their false support at once hath fail'd,
 And persevering truth prevail'd, 110
 Expos'd, their train of fraud is seen;
 Truth will at last remove the screen.

A country 'Squire, by whim directed,
 The true staunch dogs of chace neglected.
 Beneath his board no hound was fed; 115
 His hand ne'er strok'd the spaniel's head.

A snap-

A snappish Cur, alone carest,
By lies had banish'd all the rest.

YAP had his ears; and defamation
Gave him full scope of conversation. 120

His sycophants must be preferr'd,
Room must be made for all his herd:
Wherefore, to bring his schemes about,
Old faithful servants all must out.

The Cur on ev'ry creature flew, 125

(As other great mens' puppies do),
Unless due court to him were shown,
And both their face and bus'ness known;

No honest tongue an audience found:
He worried all the tenants round; 130

For why, he liv'd in constant fear,
Lest truth, by chance, should interfere.

If any stranger dare intrude,
The noisy Cur his heels pursu'd.

Now fierce with rage, now struck with dread, 135
At once he snarled, bit, and fled.

Aloof he bays, with bristling hair,
And thus in secret growls his fear:

Who knows but truth, in this disguise,
May frustrate my best guarded lies? 140

Should she (thus mask'd) admittance find,
That very hour my ruin's sign'd.

Now in his howl's continu'd sound,
Their words were lost, their voice was drown'd.

Ever in awe of honest tongues, 145
 Thus ev'ry day he strain'd his lungs.

It happen'd, in ill-omen'd hour,
 That YAP, unmindful of his pow'r,
 Forsook his post, to love inclin'd;
 A fav'rite bitch was in the wind. 150

By her seduc'd, in am'rous play,
 They frisk'd the joyous hours away.
 Thus, by untimely love pursuing,
 Like ANTHONY, he fought his ruin.

For now the 'Squire, unvex'd with noise, 155
 An honest neighbour's chat enjoys.
 Be free, says he; your mind impart;
 I love a friendly open heart.

Methinks my tenants shun my gate;
 Why such a stranger grown of late? 160
 Pray tell me what offence they find?
 'Tis plain they're not so well inclin'd.

Turn off your Cur (the farmer cries)
 Who feeds your ear with daily lies.
 His snarling insolence offends: 165
 'Tis he that keeps you from your friends.
 Were but that faucy puppy check'd,
 You'd find again the same respect.

L. 154. Prior, speaking of beauty, says:

“ This through the East just vengeance hurl'd,
 “ And lost poor *Anthony* the world.”

Hear

Hear only him, he'll swear it too,

That all our hatred is to you.

170

But learn from us your true estate;

'Tis that curs'd Cur alone we hate.

The 'Squire heard truth. Now YAP rush'd in;

The wide hall echoes with his din:

Yet truth prevail'd; and, with disgrace,

175

The Dog was cudgell'd out of place.

FABLE 7.

The Countryman and Jupiter.

TO MYSELF.

HAVE you a friend (look round and spy)

So fond, so prepossess'd as I?

Your faults, so obvyous to mankind,

My partial eyes could never find.

When, by the breath of fortune blown,

5

Your airy castles were o'erthrown;

Have I been ever prone to blame,

Or mortify'd your hours with shame?

Was I e'er known to damp your spirit,
Or twit you with the want of merit? 10

'Tis not so strange, that fortune's frown
Still perseveres to keep you down.

Look round, and see what others do;

Would you be rich and honest too?

Have you, like those she rais'd to place, 15

Been opportunely mean and base?

Have you (as times requir'd) resign'd

Truth, honour, virtue, peace of mind?

If these are scruples, give her o'er;

Write, practise morals, and be poor. 20

The gifts of fortune truly rate;

Then tell me what would mend your state.

If happiness on wealth were built,

Rich rogues might comfort find in guilt;

As grows the miser's hoarded store, 25

His fears, his wants, increase the more.

Think GAY (what ne'er may be the case)

Should fortune take you into grace,

Would that your happiness augment?

What can she give beyond content? 30

Suppose yourself a wealthy heir,

With a vast annual income clear:

In all the affluence you possess,

You might not feel one care the less.

Might you not then, like others, find 35

With change of fortune, change of mind?

Perhaps,

Perhaps, profuse beyond all rule,
 You might start out a glaring fool;
 Your luxury might break all bounds:
 Plate, table, horses, stewards, hounds, 40
 Might swell your debts: then, lust of play
 No regal income can defray.
 Sunk is all credit, writs assail,
 And doom your future life to jail.
 Or, were you dignify'd with pow'r, 45
 Would that avert one pensive hour?
 You might give avarice its swing,
 Defraud a nation, blind a king:
 Then, from the hirelings in your cause,
 Tho' daily fed with false applause, 50
 Could it a real joy impart?
 Great guilt knew never joy at heart.
 Is happiness your point in view?
 (I mean, th' intrinsic and the true)
 She nor in camps or courts resides, 55
 Nor in the humble cottage hides;
 Yet found alike in ev'ry sphere;
 Who finds content, will find her there.

O'er-

L. 58. It has been justly remarked, that a writer often best describes the excellence of that virtue in which he is most deficient; and can most feelingly paint the miseries of that state which he himself has experienced.

Thus Steel, who suffered so much from want of œconomy, wrote admirably upon œconomy; and Gay, whose sanguine disposition was continually forming hopes which were continually

O'erſpent with toil, beneath the ſhade,
A peaſant reſted on a ſpade.

60

Good gods! he cries, 'tis hard to bear
This load of life from year to year.

Soon as the morning ſtreaks the ſkies,
Induſtrious labour makes me riſe;

With ſweat I earn my homely fare,
And ev'ry day renews my care.

65

Jove heard the diſcontented ſtrain,
And thus rebuk'd the murm'ring ſwain:

Speak out your wants then, honeſt friend:
Unjuſt complaints the gods offend.

70

If you repine at partial fate,
Inſtruct me what could mend your ſtate.
Mankind in ev'ry ſtation ſee.

What wiſh you? Tell me what you'd be.

So ſaid, upborne upon a cloud,
'The clown ſurvey'd the anxious crowd.

75

Yon face of care, ſays Jove, behold,
His bulky bags are fill'd with gold.

diſappointed, who was ever fighting for what he had not, and not enjoying what he had, has in many parts of his Fables, but particularly in this beautiful introduction, diſplayed in juſt colours, the bleſſedneſs of a contented mind.

The old proverb of *Physician cure thyſelf*, might have been applied to Gay. He could not follow the doctrines which he preached; he did not poſſeſs that content which he deſcribes as ſo eſſential to human happineſs. Diſcontent took poſſeſſion of his mind, and preying upon a weak conſtitution, prematurely hurried him to the grave.

See

See with what joy he counts it o'er!

60 That sum to day hath swell'd his store. 80

Were I that man, (the Peasant cry'd)

What blessing could I ask beside?

Hold, says the God: first learn to know

True happiness from outward show.

65 This optic glass of intuition— 85

Here, take it, view his true condition.

He look'd, and saw the miser's breast,

A troubled ocean, ne'er at rest;

Want ever stares him in the face,

70 And fear anticipates disgrace: 90

With conscious guilt he saw him start;

Extortion knows his throbbing heart;

And never, or in thought or dream,

His breast admits one happy gleam.

75 May Jove, he cries, reject my pray'r, 95

And guard my life from guilt and care.

My soul abhors that wretch's fate,

O keep me in my humble state!

L. 85. *This optic glass of intuition*, which enabled the Countryman to see *intuitively* things as they really were, had a similar effect to that which the Angel produced on the eyes of Adam:

“ Michael from Adam's eyes the film remov'd,

“ Which that false fruit, that promis'd clearer sight

“ Had bred; then purg'd with euphrasy and rue

“ The visual nerve, for he had much to see;

“ And from the well of life thee drops instill'd,

“ So deep the pow'r of these ingredients pierc'd,

“ Ev'n th' inmost seat of mental sight.”

MILTON'S *Paradise Lost*, b. II, l. 412.

But see, amidst a gaudy crowd,
 Yon minister, so gay and proud, 100
 On him what happiness attends,
 Who thus rewards his grateful friends!

First take the glass, the God replies :
 Man views the world with partial eyes.

Good gods ! exclaims the startled wight, 105

Defend me from this hideous sight !

Corruption, with corrosive smart,

Lies cank'ring on his guilty heart :

I see him, with polluted hand,

Spread the contagion o'er the land. 110

Now avarice with insatiate jaws,

Now rapine with her harpy claws,

His bosom tears. His conscious breast

Groans, with a load of crimes oppress'd.

See him, mad and drunk with power, 115

Stand tott'ring on ambition's tower.

Sometimes, in speeches vain and proud,

His boasts insult the nether crowd ;

Now, seiz'd with giddiness and fear,

He trembles lest his fall is near. 120

Was ever wretch like this ! he cries ;

Such misery in such disguise !

The change, O Jove, I disavow ;

Still be my lot the spade and plough.

He next, confirm'd by speculation, 125

Rejects the lawyer's occupation :

For

For he the statesman seem'd in part,
 And bore similitude of heart.
 Nor did the soldier's trade inflame
 His hopes with thirst of spoil and fame; 130
 The miseries of war he mourn'd;
 Whole nations into desarts turn'd.

By these have laws and rights been brav'd;
 By these was free-born man enslav'd:
 When battles and invasions cease, 135
 Why swarm they in a land of peace?
 Such change (says he) may I decline;
 'The scythe and civil arms be mine!
 Thus, weighing life in each condition,
 The clown withdrew his rash petition. 140
 When

This Fable shews, from the example of the discontented Countryman, who found by experience, that his own situation was preferable to those which he envied, what a false estimate they make of life, who are silly enough, as Gay says in another place,

— “ *by outward show*
 “ *To judge of happiness below.*”

Fable 49.

In fact, the situation which Providence has allotted for us is best; and it is a proof of great folly not to be contented and grateful for the comforts which we enjoy. The sentiment in the Introduction, that happiness

“ *Is found alike in every sphere,*
 “ *Who finds content, will find her there;*”

And repeated in the concluding lines, that happiness

“ *Is to no rank of life confin'd;*”

is well expressed by CAWTHORN in a Poetical Dialogue, on the Equality of Human Conditions:

“ All lots are equal, and all states the same,
 “ Alike in merit, tho' unlike in name.

“ In

When thus the God : How mortals err !
 If you true hapiness prefer,
 'Tis to no rank of life confin'd,
 But dwells in ev'ry honest mind.
 Be justice then your sole pursuit ;
 Plant virtue, and content's the fruit.

145

So Jove, to gratify the clown,
 Where first he found him set him down.

" In Reason's eye no difference lies between
 " Life's noon-day lustres or her milder scene.
 " 'Tis not the plate that dignifies the board,
 " Not all the titles blazing round a lord ;
 " 'Tis not the splendid plume, th' embroider'd vest,
 " The gorgeous sword-knot, or the martial crest,
 " That lends to life the smile, the jest, the glee,
 " Or makes his honour happier than me." &c.
 " CONTENT's the port all mortals wish to hail :
 " She points the compass, and she guides the sail.
 " To her alone our leaky vessels roll
 " Thro' all the seas that rage from pole to pole.
 " What boots it then, when gath'ring storms behind
 " Rise back in air, and howl in ev'ry wind ;
 " That thy rich ship a pomp of pride display'd,
 " Her masts all cedar, and her sails brocade !
 " Say, canst thou think the tempest will discern
 " A silken cable, or a painted stern ;
 " Hush the wild tumult that tornados bring,
 " And kindly spare the yacht that holds a king?"

JOHNSON'S POETS, v. 65, p. 199.

FABLE 8.

The Man, the Cat, the Dog, and the Fly.

TO MY NATIVE COUNTRY.

HAIL, happy land! whose fertile grounds
 The liquid fence of NEPTUNE bounds;
 By bounteous Nature set apart,
 The seat of industry and art!
 O BRITAIN, chosen Port of trade, 5
 May luxury ne'er thy sons invade!
 May never minister (intent
 His private treasures to augment)
 Corrupt thy state! If jealous foes
 Thy rights of commerce dare oppose, 10
 Shall not thy fleets their rapine awe?
 Who is't prescribes the ocean law?
 Whenever neighb'ring states contend,
 'Tis thine to be the gen'ral friend.

L. 2. *The liquid fence of Neptune bounds.*

"Sea-girt Britain," in Waller;

And called in Rowe,

"The noblest of the ocean's isles."

What

What is't, who rules in other lands? 15
 On trade alone thy glory stands;
 That benefit is unconfin'd,
 Diffusing good among mankind;
 That first gave lustre to thy reigns,
 And scatter'd plenty o'er thy plains: 20
 'Tis that alone thy wealth supplies,
 And draws all EUROPE's envious eyes.
 Be commerce then thy sole design;
 Keep that, and all the world is thine.

When naval traffic ploughs the main, 25
 Who shares not in the merchant's gain?
 'Tis that supports the regal state,
 And makes the farmer's heart elate:
 The num'rous flocks, that clothe the land,
 Can scarce supply the loom's demand; 30
 Prolific culture glads the fields,
 And the bare heath a harvest yields.

Nature expects mankind should share
 The duties of the public care.

Who's

L. 33, to 64. These beautiful lines inculcate the necessity of industry; and the reciprocal advantages drawn from the inequality of conditions, according to the observation on the forty-third Fable:

"Since ev'ry creature was decreed,
 To aid each other's mutual need.

"If we confound," says the Commentator on *Æsop's Fables*,
 "higher and lower, the world is a *Chaos* again, and a level. Is
 "not a labourer, as much a tool of Providence, as the master
 "builder? Are not the meanest Artisans of the same institution
 "with Ministers of Counsel and State? The head can no more
 "be

15 Who's born for sloth ?* To some we find 35
 The plough-share's annual toil assign'd.
 Some at the sounding anvil glow ;
 Some the swift-gliding shuttle throw,
 Some, studious of the wind and tide,
 20 From pole to pole our commerce guide ; 40
 Some (taught by industry) impart
 With hands and feet the works of art ;
 While some of genius more refin'd
 With head and tongue assist mankind.
 25 Each, aiming at one common end, 45
 Proves to the whole a needful friend.
 Thus, born each other's useful aid,
 By turns are obligations paid.
 The monarch, when his table's spread,
 30 Is to the clown oblig'd for bread ; 50
 And when in all his glory drest,
 Owes to the loom his royal vest.
 Do not the mason's toil and care
 Protect him from th' inclement air !
 Does not the cutler's art supply 55
 The ornament that guards his thigh ?

" be without the body, than the body without the head ; and
 " neither of them without hands and feet to defend, and provide,
 " both for the one, and for the other. Government can no more
 " subsist without subjection, than the multitude can agree with-
 " out government ; and the duty of obeying, is no less of Divine
 " appointment, than the authority of commanding."

L'ESTRANGE'S *ÆSOP*, v. 1, p. 169.

* BARROW.

All

All these, in duty to the throne,
 Their common obligations own.
 'Tis he (his own and people's cause)
 Protects their properties and laws. 60
 Thus they their honest toil employ,
 And with content the fruits enjoy.
 In ev'ry rank, or great or small,
 'Tis industry supports us all.

The animals, by want oppress'd 65
 To man their services address'd;
 While each pursu'd their selfish good,
 They hunger'd for precarious food.
 Their hours with anxious cares were vex'd;
 One day they fed, and starv'd the next. 70
 They saw that plenty, sure and rife,
 Was found alone in social life;
 That mutual industry profess'd,
 The various wants of man redress'd.

The Cat, half-famish'd, lean and weak, 75
 Demands the privilege to speak.

Well, Pufs, (says Man) and what can you
 To benefit the public do?

The Cat replies: these teeth, these claws, 80
 With vigilance shall serve the cause.
 The mouse, destroy'd by my pursuit,
 No longer shall your feasts pollute;

L. 71. *Rife*, means abundant.

Nor rats, from nightly ambuscade,
With wasteful teeth your stores invade.

I grant, says man, to gen'ral use 85
Your parts and talents may conduce;
For rats and mice purloin our grain,
And threshers whirl the flail in vain:
Thus shall the Cat, a foe to spoil,
Protect the farmer's honest toil. 90

Then turning to the Dog, he cry'd:
Well, Sir; be next your merits try'd.

Sir, says the Dog, by self-applause
We seem to own a friendless cause.

Ask those who know me, if distrust 95

E'er found me treach'rous or unjust?

Did I e'er faith or friendship break?

Ask all those creatures; let them speak.

My vigilance and trusty zeal

Perhaps might suit the public weal. 100

Might not your flocks in safety feed,

Were I to guard the fleecy breed!

Did I the nightly watches keep,

Could thieves invade you while you sleep?

The man replies. 'Tis just and right; 105

Rewards such service should requite.

So rare, in property, we find

Trust uncorrupt among mankind,

That, taken in a public view,

The first distinction is your due. 110

Such

Such merits all reward transcend :
 Be then my comrade and my friend.
 Addressing now the Fly : From you
 What public service can accrue?
 From me ! (the flutt'ring insect said) 115
 I thought you knew me better bred.
 Sir, I'm a gentleman. Is't fit
 That I to industry submit?
 Let mean mechanics to be fed
 By bus'ness earn ignoble bread. 120
 Lost in excess of daily joys,
 No thought, no care my life annoys,
 At noon (the lady's matin hour)
 I sip the tea's delicious flow'r.
 On cates luxuriously I dine, 125
 And drink the fragrance of the vine.
 Studious of elegance and ease,
 Myself alone I seek to please.

The man his pert conceit derides,
 And thus the useless coxcomb chides : 130
 Hence, from that peach, that downy seat;
 No idle fool deserves to eat.
 Could you have sapp'd the blushing rind,
 And on that pulp ambrosial din'd,
 Had not some hand with skill and toil, 135
 To raise the tree, prepar'd the soil?
 Consider, sot, what would ensue,
 Were all such worthless things as you.

You'd

FABLE 8. PART 2.

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You'd soon be forc'd (by hunger stung)
To make your dirty meals on dung ;
On which such despicable need,
Unpitied, is reduc'd to feed.

140

Besides, vain selfish insect, learn,
(If you can right and wrong discern)

That he who, with industrious zeal,
Contributes to the public weal,

145

By adding to the common good,
His own hath rightly understood.

So saying, with a sudden blow,
He laid the noxious vagrant low,
Crush'd in his luxury and pride,
The spunger on the public dy'd.

150

This Fable marks the difference between substantial merit, and empty ostentation. The Cat and the Dog, claim and obtain support for their vigilance and fidelity ; the Fly, on the contrary, prides itself on indolence and voluptuousness, and has no other motive to rule his conduct, than self gratification.

FABLE 9.

The Jackall, Leopard, and other Beasts.

TO A MODERN POLITICIAN.

I GRANT corruption sways mankind,
 That int'rest too perverts the mind.
 That bribes have blinded common sense,
 Foil'd reason, truth, and eloquence :
 I grant you too, our present crimes
 Can equal those of former times.
 Against plain facts shall I engage,
 To vindicate our righteous age ?
 I know, that in a modern fist,
 Bribes in full energy subsist.
 Since then these arguments prevail,
 And itching palms are still so frail,
 Hence politicians you suggest,
 Should drive the nail that goes the best ;
 That it shows parts and penetration,
 To ply men with the right temptation.
 To this I humbly must dissent ;
 Premising no reflection's meant.

Does

Does justice or the client's sense
 Teach lawyers either side's defence? 23
 The fee give's eloquence it's spirit;
 That only is the client's merit.
 Does art, wit, wisdom, or address,
 Obtain the prostitute's cares?
 The guinea (as in other trades) 25
 From ev'ry hand alike persuades.
 Man, Scripture says, is prone to evil,
 But does that vindicate the devil?
 Besides, the more mankind are prone,
 The less the devil's parts are shown. 30
 Corruption's not of modern date;
 It hath been try'd in ev'ry state.
 Great knaves of old their power have fenc'd,
 By places, pensions, bribes, dispens'd;
 By these they glory'd in success, 35
 And impudently dar'd oppress;
 By these despotically they sway'd,
 And slaves extoll'd the hand that pay'd;
 Nor parts, nor genius were employ'd,
 By these alone were realms destroy'd. 40
 Now see these wretches in disgrace,
 Stript of their treasures, pow'r, and place;
 View 'em abandon'd and forlorn,
 Expos'd to just reproach and scorn.
 What now is all your pride, and boast? 45
 Where are your slaves, your flatt'ring host?

What

What tongues now feed you with applause?
 Where are the champions of your cause?
 Now ev'n that very fawning train
 Which shar'd the gleanings of your gain, 50
 Prefs foremost who shall first accuse
 Your selfish jobs, your paltry views,
 Your narrow schemes, your breach of trust,
 And want of talents to be just.

What fools were these amidst their pow'r? 55
 How thoughtless of their adverse hour!
 What friends were made? A hireling herd,
 For temporary votes preferr'd.
 Was it, these sycophants to get,
 Your bounty swell'd a nation's debt? 60
 You're bit. For these, like Swifs, attend;
 No longer pay, no longer friend.

The Lion is (beyond dispute)
 Allow'd the most majestic brute:
 His valour and his gen'rous mind, 65
 Prove him superior of his kind.
 Yet to Jackals (as 'tis averr'd)
 Some Lions have their pow'r transferr'd;
 As if the parts of pimps and spies
 To govern forests could suffice. 70

Once, studious of his private good,
 A proud Jackall oppress'd the wood;
 To cram his own insatiate jaws,
 Invaded property and laws.

FABLE 9. PART 2.

193

The forest groans with discontent, 75
 Fresh wrongs the gen'ral hate foment,
 The spreading murmurs reach'd his ear;
 50 His secret hours were vex'd with fear.
 Night after night he weighs the case,
 And feels the terrors of disgrace. 80

By friends (says he) I'll guard my seat,
 By those, malicious tongues defeat:
 55 I'll strengthen pow'r by new allies,
 And all my clam'rous foes despise.

To make the gen'rous beasts his friends, 85
 He cringes, fawns, and condescends;
 But those repuls'd his abject court,
 60 And scorn'd oppression to support.
 Friends must be had. He can't subsist.
 Bribes shall new proselytes enlist. 90
 But these nought weigh'd in honest paws;
 For bribes confess'd a wicked cause:
 65 Yet think not ev'ry paw withstands
 What hath prevail'd in human hands.

A tempting turnip's silver skin 95
 Drew a base Hog through thick and thin:
 Bought with a Stag's delicious haunch,
 70 The mercenary Wolf was staunch:
 The convert Fox grew warm and hearty,
 A Pullet gain'd him to the party; 100
 The golden pippin in his fist,
 A chatt'ring Monkey join'd the list;

The

K

But

But soon expos'd to public hate,
 The fav'rite's fall redress'd the state.
 The Leopard, vindicating right, 105
 Had brought his secret frauds to light;
 As rats, before the mansion falls,
 Desert late hospitable walls;
 In shoals the servile creatures run,
 To bow before the rising sun. 110

The Hog with warmth express'd his zeal,
 And was for hanging those that steal;
 But hop'd, tho' low, the public hoard,
 Might half a turnip still afford.
 Since saving measures were profess'd, 115
 A lamb's head was the wolf's request.

The Fox submitted, if to touch
 A gosling would be deem'd too much.
 The Monkey thought his grin and chatter,
 Might ask a nut, or some such matter. 120

Ye hirelings hence (the Leopard cries!)
 Your venal conscience I despise.
 He who the public good intends,
 By bribes need never purchase friends.
 Who acts this just, this open part, 125
 Is propt by ev'ry honest heart.

Corruption now too late hath show'd,
 That bribes are always ill bestow'd,
 By you your bubbled master's taught,
 Time-serving tools, not friends, are bought. 130

FABLE

FABLE 10.

The Degenerate Bees.

TO THE REVEREND DR. SWIFT, DEAN OF
ST. PATRICK'S.*

THOUGH courts the practice disallow,
A friend at all times I'll avow.
In politics I know 'tis wrong;
A friendship may be kept too long;
And that they call the prudent part, 5
Is to wear int'rest next the heart:
As the times take a different face,
Old friendships should to new give place.
I know too you have many foes,
That owning you is sharing those; 10

* Jonathan Swift, the author of *Gulliver's Travels*, the *Tale of a Tub*, and numerous other celebrated publications, to whom Gay addresses this Fable, is too well known to need any further account of him.

Swift was greatly attached to Gay, and strongly recommended him to Lord Oxford and Lord Bolingbroke, during their administration. Gay never forgot his obligations to those who had served him, and has in many parts of his works, as well as in this Fable, paid a tribute of gratitude to Swift.

That ev'ry knave, in ev'ry station,
 Of high and low denomination,
 For what you speak, and what you write,
 Dread you at once, and bear your spite.
 Such freedoms in your works are shown, 15
 They can't enjoy what's not their own.
 All dunces too, in church and state,
 In frothy nonsense shew their hate;
 With all the petty scribbling crew,
 (And those pert fots are not a few,) 20
 'Gainst you and POPE their envy spurt,
 The booksellers alone are hurt.

Good gods! by what a powerful race
 (For blockheads may have pow'r and place)
 Are scandals rais'd, and libels writ, 25
 To prove your honesty and wit?
 Think with yourself: those worthy men,
 You know, have suffer'd by your pen;
 From them you've nothing but your due,
 From thence, 'tis plain your friends are few. 30
 Except myself, I know of none,
 Besides the wife and good alone.
 To set the case in fairer light,
 My Fable shall the rest recite;
 Which (tho' unlike our present state) 35
 I for the moral's sake relate:

A Bee of cunning, not of parts,
 Luxurious, negligent of arts,

Rapa-

Rapacious, arrogant, and vain,
 Greedy of pow'r, but more of gain, 40
 Corruption sow'd throughout the hive;
 By petty rogues the great ones thrive.

As pow'r and wealth his views supply'd,
 'Twas seen in over-bearing pride.
 With him loud impudence had merit; 45
 The Bee of conscience wanted spirit;
 And those who follow'd honour's rules,
 Were laugh'd to scorn for squeamish fools.
 Wealth claim'd distinction, favour, grace;
 And poverty alone was base. 50

He treated industry with slight,
 Unless he found some profit by't.
 Rights, laws, and liberties gave way,
 To bring his selfish schemes in play.
 The swarm forgot the common toil, 55
 To share the gleanings of his spoil.

While vulgar souls, of narrow parts,
 Waste life in low mechanic arts,
 Let us, says he, to genius born,
 The drudg'ry of our fathers scorn. 60
 The Wasp and Drone, you must agree,
 Live with more elegance than we.
 Like gentlemen they sport and play;
 No bus'ness interrupts the day:
 Their hours to luxury they give, 65
 And nobly on their neighbours live.

A stubborn Bee, among the swarm,
 With honest indignation warm,
 Thus from his cell with zeal reply'd:

I slight thy frowns, and hate thy pride. 70
 The laws our native rights protect :
 Offending thee, I those respect.

Shall luxury corrupt the hive,
 And none against the torrent strive ?

Exert the honour of your race ; 75
 He builds his rise on your disgrace.

'Tis industry our state maintains :

'Twas honest toils and honest gains

That rais'd our fires to pow'r and fame.

Be virtuous : save yourself from shame. 80

Know, that in selfish ends pursuing,

You scramble for the public ruin.

He spoke ; and from his cell dismiss'd,

Was insolently scoff'd and hiss'd.

With him a friend or two resign'd, 85

Disdaining the degen'rate kind.

These drones, says he, these insects vile,

(I treat them in their proper style)

May for a time oppress the state,

They own our virtue by their hate ; 90

By that our merit they reveal,

And recommend our public zeal ;

Disgrac'd by this corrupted crew,

We're honour'd by the virtuous few.

FABLE 11.



The Pack-Horse and the Carrier.



TO A YOUNG NOBLEMAN.

BEGIN, my Lord, in early youth,
 To suffer, nay, encourage truth :
 And blame me not for disrespect,
 If I the statt'rer's style reject ;
 With that, by menial tongue supply'd, 5
 You're daily cocker'd up in pride.

The tree's distinguish'd by the fruit,
 Be virtue then your first pursuit ;
 Set your great ancestors in view,
 Like them deserve the title too ; 10
 Like them ignoble actions scorn :
 Let virtue prove you greatly born.

Though with less plate their side-board shone,
 Their conscience always was their own ;

They ne'er at levees meanly fawn'd, 15
 Nor was their honour yearly pawn'd;
 Their hands, by no corruption stain'd,
 The ministerial bribe disdain'd;
 'They serv'd the crown with loyal zeal;
 Yet, jealous of the public weal, 20
 They stood the bulwark of our laws,
 And wore at heart their country's cause;
 By neither place or pension bought,
 They spoke and voted as they thought.
 Thus did your fires adorn their seat; 25
 And such alone are truly great.

If you the paths of learning slight,
 You're but a dunce in stronger light;
 In foremost rank the coward plac'd,
 Is more conspicuously disgrac'd. 30
 If you, to serve a paltry end,
 To knavish jobs shall condescend,
 We pay you the contempt that's due;
 In that you have precedence too.
 Whence had you this illustrious name? 35
 From virtue and unblemish'd fame.
 By birth the name alone descends;
 Your honour on yourself depends:
 Think not your coronet can hide
 Assuming ignorance and pride. 40
 Learning by study must be won,
 'Twas ne'er entail'd from son to son.

Supe-

Superior worth your rank requires ;
 For that mankind reveres your fires :
 If you degen'rate from your race, 45
 Their merits heighten your disgrace.

A Carrier, ev'ry night and morn,
 Would see his horses eat their corn :
 This sunk the hostler's vails, 'tis true :
 But then his horses had their due. 50
 Were we so cautious in all cases,
 Small gain would rise from greater places.

The manger now had all its measure ;
 He heard the grinding teeth with pleasure ;
 When all at once confusion rung ; 55
 They snorted, jostled, bit, and flung.
 A Pack-horse turn'd his head aside,
 Foaming, his eye-balls swell'd with pride.

Good gods! (says he) how hard's my lot!
 Is then my high descent forgot ? 60
 Reduc'd to drudg'ry and disgrace,
 (A life unworthy of my race)
 Must I too bear the vile attacks
 Of ragged scrubs, and vulgar hacks?
 See scurvy ROAN, that brute ill-bred, 65
 Dares from the manger thrust my head!
 Shall I, who boast a noble line,
 On offals of these creatures dine?
 Kick'd by old BALL! so mean a foe!
 My honour suffers by the blow. 70

NEWMARKET speaks my grandfire's fame;
 All jockies still revere his name:
 There yearly are his triumphs told,
 There all his massy plates inroll'd,
 Whene'er led forth upon the plain, 75
 You saw him with a liv'ry train;
 Returning too with laurels crown'd,
 You heard the drums and trumpets found.
 Let it then, Sir, be understood,
 Respect's my due; for I have blood. 80
 Vain-glorious fool! (the Carrier cry'd)
 Respect was never made for pride. }
 Know, 'twas thy giddy wilful heart
 Reduc'd thee to this slavish part.
 Did not thy headstrong youth disdain 85
 To learn the conduct of the rein?
 Thus coxcombs, blind to real merit,
 In vicious frolics fancy spirit.
 What is't to me by whom begot?
 Thou restive, pert, conceited sot. 90
 Your fires I reverence; 'tis their due:
 But, worthless fool, what's that to you?
 Ask all the Carriers on the road,
 They'll say thy keeping's ill bestow'd.
 Then vaunt no more thy noble race, 95
 That neither mends thy strength or pace.
 What profits me thy boast of blood?
 An ass hath more intrinsic good.

By

By outward shew let's not be cheated;
An afs should like an afs be treated.

100

This Fable strongly inculcates the truth, that learning and virtue are not, like honours, hereditary; and that high birth and elevated stations, where misapplied and degenerated, only serve to render bad conduct more conspicuous, and vice more hideous.

As Gay justly observes:

*"In foremost ranks the coward plac'd,
Is more conspicuously disgrac'd."*

FABLE 12.

Pan and Fortune.†*

TO A YOUNG HEIR.

SOON as your father's death was known,
(As if the estate had been their own)

The

* Pan, one of the heathen deities, who presided over the sports and occupations of the field. He was the God of Shepherds and Hunters. He was painted by the ancients with large horns, as half man and half goat. He had a shepherd's crook in one hand, and a pipe in the other, on which he played most divinely. The nymphs and swains are represented as dancing round him, to hear the charms of his pipe. Hence he is called, by Fenton,

"The Poet of the plains;"

and, in allusion to his fondness for the country, Addison describes him as

———"The great Pan,
Who lov'd the spreading oak."

† Fortune, an allegorical divinity among the heathens, was

The gamesters outwardly exprest
The decent joy within your breast.

So lavish in your praise they grew,
As spoke their certain hopes in you.

5

One counts your income of the year,
How much in ready money clear.

No house, says he, is more compleat;
The garden's elegant and great.

10

How fine the park around it lies!

The timber's of a noble size!

Then count his jewels and his plate.

Besides, 'tis no entail'd estate.

If cash run low, his lands in fee

15

Are, or for sale, or mortgage free.

Thus they, before you threw the main,
Seem to anticipate their gain.

figured to preside over Good and Evil. She is usually represented as a young woman with her eyes veiled, and wings to her feet, standing with one foot on a globe, and the other in the air, scattering riches at random. She is sometimes figured as standing on a wheel, turning rapidly, to shew the ups and downs which take place in life. Hence the wheel of fortune signifies the uncertainty of human possessions. In this situation, Fortune is well described by Garth:

“ On high, where no hoarse winds, nor clouds resort,
“ The hoodwink'd Goddess keeps her partial court,
“ Upon a wheel of amethyst she sits,
“ Gives and resumes, and smiles, and frowns by fits.”

Dispensary, Canto 4, l. 323.

Would

Would you, when thieves were known abroad,
Bring forth your treasures in the road? 20

Would not the fool abet the stealth,
Who rashly thus expos'd his wealth?

Yet this you do, whene'er you play
Among the gentlemen of prey.

Could fools to keep their own contrive, 25
On what, on whom could gamesters thrive?
Is it in charity you game,

To save your worthy gang from shame?

Unless you furnish'd daily bread,
Which way could idleness be fed? 30

Could these professors of deceit

Within the law no longer cheat,

They must run bolder risks for prey,

And strip the trav'ller on the way.

Thus in your annual rents they share, 35

And 'scape the noose from year to year.

Consider, ere you make the bet,

That sum might cross your tailor's debt;

When you the pilf'ring rattle shake,

Is not your honour too at stake? 40

Must you not by mean lies evade

To-morrow's duns from ev'ry trade?

By promises so often paid,

Is yet your tailor's bill defray'd?

Must you not pitifully fawn,

45

To have your butcher's writ withdrawn?

This

This must be done. In debts of play
Your honour suffers no delay :
And not this year's and next year's rent,
The sons of rapine can content. 50

Look round : the wrecks of play behold,
Estates dismember'd, mortgag'd, sold !
Their owners, not to jails confin'd,
Shew equal poverty of mind.
Some, who the spoil of knaves were made, 55
Too late attempt to learn their trade.
Some, for the folly of one hour,
Become the dirty tools of pow'r,
And, with the mercenary list,
Upon court charity subsist. 60

You'll find at last this maxim true,
Fools are the game which knaves pursue.

The forest (a whole cent'ry's shade)
Must be one wasteful ruin made.
No mercy's shewn to age or kind ; 65
The general massacre is sign'd.
The park too shares the dreadful fate,
For duns grow louder at the gate ;
Stern clowns, obedient to the 'Squire,
(What will not barb'rous hands for hire ? 70
With brawny arms repeat the stroke ;
Fall'n are the elm and rev'rend oak.
Through the long wood loud axes sound,
And echo groans with ev'ry wound.

To see the desolation spread,

75

PAN drops a tear, and hangs his head :

His bosom now with fury burns ;

Beneath his hoof the dice he spurns.

Cards, too, in peevish passion torn,

The sport of whirling winds are borne.

80

To snails invet'rate hate I bear,

Who spoil the verdure of the year ;

The caterpillar I detest,

The blooming spring's voracious pest ;

The locust, too, whose rav'nous hand

85

Spreads sudden famine o'er the land.

But what are these ? The dice's throw

At once hath laid a forest low.

The cards are dealt, the bet is made,

And the wide park hath lost its shade.

90

Thus is my kingdom's pride defac'd,

And all its ancient glories waste ;

All this (he cries) is FORTUNE's doing ;

'Tis thus she meditates my ruin.

By FORTUNE, that false, fickle jade,

95

More havock in one hour is made

Than all the hungry insect race,

Combin'd, can in an age deface.

FORTUNE, by chance, who near him past,

O'erheard the vile aspersions cast.

100

Why, PAN, (says she) what's all this rant ?

'Tis ev'ry country bubble's cant.

Am

Am I the patroness of vice?
 Is't I who cog or palm the dice?
 Did I the shuffling art reveal?
 To mark the cards, or range the deal?
 In all th' employments men pursue,
 I mind the least what gamesters do.
 There may (if computation's just)
 One now and then my conduct trust:
 I blame the fool, for what can I,
 When ninety-nine my powers defy?
 These trust alone their fingers' ends,
 And not one stake on me depends.
 Whene'er the gaming board is set,
 Two classes of mankind are met:
 But if we count the greedy race,
 The knaves fill up the greater space.
 'Tis a cross error, held in schools,
 That FORTUNE always favours fools.

L. 104. To *cog the dice*, means to load them with a small bit of lead, by which means one particular number is oftener thrown.

To *palm the dice*, means to convey them under the *palm* of the hand, and substitute others in their stead.—As Prior says:

“They *palm'd* the trick that lost the game.”

Gay also says, in his *Newgate Garland*:

“Ye gallants of Newgate, whose fingers are nice,
 “In diving in pockets, and *cogging of dice*.”

In

In play it never bears dispute:
 That doctrine these fell'd oaks confute.
 Then why to me such rancour shew?
 'Tis Folly, PAN, that is thy foe.
 By me his late estate he won, 125
 But he by Folly was undone.

FABLE 13.

*Plutus, Cupid, and Time.**

OF all the burdens man must bear,
 Time seems most galling and severe:
 Beneath this grievous load oppress'd,
 We daily meet some friend distress'd.

* Time, whom the Heathens represented as a God, was always figured as an old man, with a scythe in his hand, as an emblem of destruction; and with expanded wings, to shew that he is always in motion. His head bald, excepting a forelock: hence the proverb, "To take Time by the forelock." He was sometimes considered the same as Saturn, who is therefore figured to have devoured his own offspring.

What

What can one do? I rose at nine;
 'Tis full six hours before we dine;
 Six hours no earthly thing to do!
 Would I had doz'd in bed till two!

A pamphlet is before him spread,
 And almost half a page is read;
 Tir'd with the study of the day,
 The flutt'ring sheets are tost away.
 He opes his snuff-box, hums an air,
 Then yawns, and stretches in his chair.

Not twenty, by the minute hand!
 Good gods! says he, my watch must stand!
 How muddling 'tis on books to pore!
 I thought I'd read an hour or more.
 The morning, of all hours, I hate,
 One can't contrive to rise too late.

To make the minutes faster run,
 Then too his tiresome self to shun,
 To the next coffee-house he speeds,
 Takes up the News; some scraps he reads;
 Saunt'ring, from chair to chair he trails;
 Now drinks his tea, now bites his nails;
 He spies a partner of his woe;

By that afflictions lighter grow;
 Each other's grievances they share,
 And thus their dreadful hours compare:

Says TOM, since all men must confess,
 That Time lies heavy, more or less,

5

10

15

20

25

30

Why

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5 Why should it be so hard to get
 Till two a party at piquet?
 Play might relieve the lagging morn; 35
 By cards long wintry nights are borne.
 Does not quadrille amuse the fair,
 10 Night after night, throughout the year?
 Vapours and spleen forgot, at play,
 They cheat uncounted hours away, 40
 My case, says WILL, then, must be hard,
 By want of skill from play debarr'd.
 15 Courtiers kill Time by various ways;
 Dependance wears out half their days.
 How happy these, whose time ne'er stands; 45
 Attendance takes it off their hands.
 Were it not for this cursed shower,
 20 The park had whil'd away an hour.
 At court, without or place, or view,
 I daily lose an hour or two; 50

L. 37. *Does not Quadrille amuse the fair?*

When Gay wrote his Fables, Quadrille was the most fashionable game.

He has written a Ballad on Quadrille, which thus begins:

"When as corruption hence did go,
 "And left the nation free;
 "When ay said ay, and no said no,
 "Without or place, or fee;
 "Then Satan, thinking things went ill,
 "Sent forth his spirit, call'd *Quadrille*.
 "Quadrille, Quadrille, Quadrille!"

It

It fully answers my design,
 When I have pick'd up friends to dine;
 The tavern makes our burden light;
 Wine puts our Time and care to flight.
 At six (hard case!) they call to pay. 55
 Where can one go? I hate the play.
 From six till ten, unless I sleep,
 One cannot spend the hours so cheap.
 The comedy's no sooner done,
 But some assembly is begun; 60
 Loit'ring from room to room I stray;
 Converse, but nothing hear or say:
 Quite tir'd, from fair to fair I roam.
 So soon; I dread the thoughts of home.
 From thence, to quicken slow-pac'd night, 65
 Again my tavern-friends invite:
 Here too our early mornings pass,
 Till drowsy sleep retards the glass.
 Thus they their wretched life bemoan,
 And make each other's case their own. 70
 Consider, friends, no hour rolls on,
 But something of your grief is gone.
 Were you to schemes of bus'ness bred,
 Did you the paths of learning tread,
 Your hours, your days, would fly too fast; 75
 You'd then regret the minute past.
 Time's fugitive, and light as wind!
 'Tis indolence that clogs your mind!

That

That load from off your spirits shake;
 You'll own and grieve for your mistake; 80
 Awhile your thoughtless spleen suspend,
 Then read, and (if you can) attend :

55 As PLUTUS, to divert his care,
 Walk'd forth one morn to take the air,
 CUPID o'ertook his strutting pace, 85
 Each star'd upon the stranger's face ;
 Till recollection set 'em right ;

60 For each knew t' other but by sight.
 After some complimentary talk,
 TIME met 'em, bow'd, and join'd their walk. 90
 Their chat on various subjects ran,
 But most what each had done for man.

65 PLUTUS assumes a haughty air,
 Just like our purse-proud fellows here.

Let kings (says he) let cobblers tell, 95
 Whose gifts among mankind excel,
 Consider courts : what draws their train ?

70 Think you 'tis loyalty, or gain ?
 That statesman hath the strongest hold,
 Whose tool of politics is gold. 100

By that, in former reigns, 'tis said,
 The knave in power hath senates led.

75 By that alone he sway'd debates,
 Enrich'd himself, and beggar'd states.

Forego your boast. You must conclude, 105
 That's most esteem'd that's most pursu'd.

Think,

Think, too, in what a woeful plight
 That wretch must live whose pocket's light.
 Are not his hours by want deprest?
 Penurious care corrodes his breast. 110
 Without respect, or love, or friends,
 His solitary day descends.

You might, says CUPID, doubt my parts,
 My knowledge, too, in human hearts,
 Should I the pow'r of gold dispute, 115
 Which great examples might confute.
 I know, when nothing else prevails,
 Persuasive money seldom fails;
 That beauty too (like other wares)
 Its price, as well as conscience, bears. 120
 Then marriage (as of late profess'd)
 Is but a money-job at best.

Consent, compliance may be sold:
 But love's beyond the price of gold;
 Smugglers there are, who, by retail, 125
 Expose what they call love, to sale;
 Such bargains are an arrant cheat:
 You purchase flatt'ry and deceit.
 Those who true love have ever try'd,
 (The common cares of life supply'd) 130
 No wants endure, no wishes make,
 But ev'ry real joy partake.
 All comfort on themselves depends;
 They want nor power, nor wealth, nor friends.

Love

Love then hath ev'ry blifs in store : 135
'Tis friendship, and 'tis something more.
Each other ev'ry wish they give,
110 Not to know love, is not to live.
Or love or money (TIME reply'd)
Were men the question to decide, 140
Would bear the prize : on both intent,
My boon's neglected or mispent.
115 'Tis I who measure vital space,
And deal out years to human race.
Though little priz'd, and seldom fought; 145
Without me love and gold are nought.
How does the miser time employ ?
120 Did I e'er see him life enjoy ?
By me forfook, the hoards he won,
Are scatter'd by his lavish son. 150
By me all useful arts are gain'd ;
Wealth, learning, wisdom is attain'd.
125 Who then would think (since such my pow'r)
That e'er I knew an idle hour ?
So subtle and so swift I fly, 155
Love's not more fugitive than I.
Who hath not heard coquettes complain
130 Of days, months, years, mispent in vain ?
For time misus'd they pine and waste,
And love's sweet pleasures never taste. 160
Those who direct their time aright,
If love or wealth their hopes excite,

In

In each pursuit fit hours employ'd,
 And both by time have been enjoy'd.
 How heedless then are mortals grown!
 How little is their int'rest known?
 In ev'ry view they ought to mind me;
 For whence once lost they never find me.

165

He spoke. The gods no more contest,
 And his superior gift confest;
 That Time, when truly understood,
 Is the most precious earthly good.

170

FABLE 14.

*The Owl, the Swan, the Cock, the Spider, the Ass,
 and the Farmer.*

TO A MOTHER.

CONVERSING with your sprightly boys,
 Your eyes have spoke the Mother's joys.
 With what delight I've heard you quote
 Their sayings in imperfect note!

I grant,

I grant, in body and in mind, 5
Nature appears profusely kind.

165 Trust not to that : act you your part ;
Imprint just morals on their heart ;
Impartially their talents scan ;
Just education forms the man. 10

Perhaps (their genius yet unknown)
170 Each lot of life's already thrown ;
That this shall plead, the next shall fight,
The last assert the church's right.
I censure not the fond intent ; 15

But how precarious is th' event !
By talents misapply'd and crost,
Consider, all your sons are lost.

One day (the tale's by MARTIAL penn'd)
A father thus address'd his friend : 20

To train my boy, and call forth sense,
You know I've stuck at no expence ;
I've try'd him in the sev'ral arts,
(The lad, no doubt, hath latent parts)
Yet trying all, he nothing knows ; 25
But, crab-like, rather backward goes.
Teach me what yet remains undone !
'Tis your advice shall fix my son.

L. 19. *Marcus Valerius Martialis*. A Roman Poet, principally a writer of Epigrams, was born at Bibilis, a town of antient Celtiberia, or Spain, in the reign of the Emperor Claudius.

Sir, says the friend, I've weigh'd the matter;
Excuse me, for I scorn to flatter: 30
Make him (nor think his genius checkt)
A herald or an architect.

Perhaps (as commonly 'tis known)
He heard th' advice, and took his own.

The boy wants wit; he's sent to school, 35
Where learning but improves the fool.
The college next must give him parts,
And cram him with the lib'ral arts.
Whether he blunders at the bar,
Or owes his infamy to war; 40
Or if by licence or degree

The sexton shares the doctor's fee:
Or from the pulpit, by the hour,
He weekly floods of nonsense pour;
We find, th' intent of nature foil'd, 45
A tailor or a butcher spoil'd.

Thus ministers have royal boons
Conferr'd on blockheads and buffoons:
In spite of nature, merit, wit,
Their friends for ev'ry post were fit. 50

But now let ev'ry muse confess
That merit finds its due success.
Th' examples of our days regard;
Where's virtue seen without reward?
Distinguish'd, and in place you find, 55
Desert and worth of ev'ry kind.

Survey the rev'rend bench, and see,

Religion, learning, piety :

The patron, ere he recommends,

Sees his own image in his friend's.

60

Is honestly disgrac'd and poor ?

What is't to us what was before ?

We all of times corrupt have heard,

When paltry minions were preferr'd ;

When all great offices, by dozens,

65

Were fill'd by brothers, sons, and cousins.

What matter ignorance and pride ?

The man was happily ally'd.

Provided that his clerk was good,

What, though he nothing understood ?

70

In church and state, the sorry race

Grew more conspicuous fools in place :

Such heads, as then a treaty made,

Had bungled in the cobbler's trade.

Consider, patrons, that such elves

75

Expose your folly with themselves.

'Tis yours, as 'tis the parent's care,

To fix each genius in its sphere.

Your partial hand can wealth dispense,

But never give a blockhead sense.

80

An Owl, of magisterial air,

Of solemn voice, of brow austere,

Assum'd the pride of human race,

And bore his wisdom in his face ;

L 2

Not

Not to depreciate learned eyes, 85
I've seen a pedant look as wise.

Within a barn, from noise retir'd,
He scorn'd the world, himself admir'd;
And, like an ancient sage, conceal'd
The follies public life reveal'd. 90

Philosophers of old, he read,
Their country's youth to science bred;
Their manners form'd for ev'ry station,
And destin'd each his occupation.

When XENOPHON, by numbers brav'd, 95
Retreated, and a people sav'd,
That laurel was not all his own;
The plant by SOCRATES was sown:

To

L. 95. *Xenophon*, was an illustrious philosopher, general, and writer of Greece. He was born at Athens about the 82nd olympiad, and was the favourite scholar of Socrates, to which Gay alludes:

"The plant by Socrates was sown."

And the preceding lines allude to his famous retreat from Persia, by which he immortalised his name as a great-general. He went with a large body of Greeks, to the assistance of Cyrus, who was engaged in a war against his brother Artaxerxes, King of Persia.—"By their assistance the army of Artaxerxes was defeated, and Cyrus being slain in the moment of victory, and the remainder of his troops joining the king, the Greeks were left alone. Their commanders, Clearchus, Menon, Proximus, Agias, and Socrates, with several inferior officers, being induced to go to the Persian camp, under the pretence of a conference, were all treacherously put to death. The Greeks giving up all for lost, were roused from their despondency by Xenophon, then a volunteer in the army. By his advice, they chose new commanders, and himself among the rest; under

To ARISTOTLE's greater name

The MACEDONIAN ow'd his fame.

100

Th' ATHENIAN bird with pride replete,

Their talents equall'd in conceit ;

And, copying the SOCRATIC rule,

Set up for master of a school.

Dogmatic jargon learnt by heart,

105

Trite sentences, hard terms of art,

" under whose conduct they forced their way through the enemy's country for upwards of two thousand miles, and after surmounting incredible difficulties and dangers, at last arrived safe at the Euxine sea. This is called *The retreat of the ten thousand*, one of the most memorable transactions in history." ADAM'S *Summary of History and Geography*, p. 468 ; a book which cannot be too strongly recommended.

Xenophon wrote an account of this expedition, which happened in the fourth year of the 94th olympiad. He composed several other works ; of which the most remarkable is the *Cyropædia*, or *the Education of Cyrus* ; and the *Apology for Socrates*. He died at a very advanced age.

L. 99. *Aristotle*, a celebrated Grecian philosopher, born at Stagyræ, a town of Macedonia, from which place he is called the Stagyræite, in the 99th olympiad, or 384 years before the christian æra. He was the scholar of Plato, and so highly renowned for the profoundness and variety of his knowledge, that he was selected by Philip, King of Macedon, for a preceptor to his son Alexander the Great ; whence Gay says,

" *To Aristotle's greater name*

" *The Macedonian ow'd his fame.*"

On his return to Athens, from the tuition of Alexander, he opened a school in the Lyceum ; and because he taught those who attended him walking, in the Greek language, (*περιπατῶν*) hence he was called the Peripatetic, and his followers Peripatetics.

ADAM'S *Summary of History and Geography*, p. 294.

L. 101. *The Athenian bird*. See Fable 32, l. 12.

To vulgar ears seem'd so profound.

They fancy'd learning in the sound.

The school had fame: the crowded place

With pupils swarm'd of ev'ry race.

110

With these the Swan's maternal care

Had sent her scarce-fledg'd cygnet heir;

The Hen (though fond and loth to part)

Here lodg'd the darling of her heart;

The Spider, of mechanic kind,

115

Aspir'd to science more refin'd;

The Afs learnt metaphors and tropes,

But most on music fix'd his hopes.

The pupils now, advanc'd in age,

Were call'd to tread life's busy stage:

120

And to the master 'twas submitted,

That each might to his part be fitted.

The Swan (says he) in arms shall shine:

The soldier's glorious toil be thine.

The Cock shall mighty wealth attain:

125

Go, seek it on the stormy main.

The court shall be the Spider's sphere:

Pow'r, fortune, shall reward him there.

In music's art the Afs's fame

Shall emulate CORELLI's name.

130

L. 130. *Corelli*. A famous musician; was a native of Fusignano, near Bologna, in the Pope's territories. He was born in 1653, and died at Rome in 1713, aged sixty. Gay seems to have been very fond of this celebrated musician, and in his *Epistle to William Pulteney, Esq.* again

"Mentions the force of learn'd Corelli's notes."

Each

Each took the part that he advis'd,
 And all were equally despis'd.
 A Farmer, at his folly mov'd,
 The dull preceptor thus reprov'd :

Blockhead (says he) by what you've done, 135
 One would have thought 'em each your son :

For

The moral of this Fable is founded upon the supposition, that children are born with a *genius* for some particular pursuit, as the Swan is calculated for the water, the Game-cock for fighting, the Spider for spinning, and that some, like the Asis, are incapable of improvement, but are stamped blockheads from their cradle.

Though in a very *few* instances it may *appear*, that children *seem* born to excel in some particular art or science; yet in general the position is by no means true; it is also productive of this bad effect, that it is too often an excuse for idleness, and may lead boys to the irretrievable error of supposing, that nature never intended them to be scholars. But we may rest assured, that the success in all acquirements depends more upon education and habit, than on any *innate* talents or *heaven-born* genius; nor can it be too strongly inculcated, that labour and industry are the great sources of improvement, and that a blockhead is oftener the creature of indolence, than the production of nature:

This opinion is beautifully exemplified in Percival's *Moral Tale*, addressed to his son: "Two young beech trees, planted
 "at the same time, and in the same soil, at a small distance from
 "each other, and equally healthy, were made the subjects of a
 "curious experiment. They were accurately measured, and as
 "soon as the body began to swell, in the spring, the whole trunk
 "of one of them was cleared of its moss and dirt, by means of a
 "brush and soft water; afterwards it was washed with a wet
 "flannel, twice or thrice every week, till about the middle of
 "summer. In autumn, when the annual growth was supposed
 "to be completed, the beeches were again measured; and the
 "increase of the tree which had been washed, was found to ex-
 "ceed that of the other, nearly in the proportion of two to one.
 "Had you seen the commencement of this experiment, Alexis,

For parents, to their offspring blind,
 Consult nor parts nor turn of mind ;
 But ev'n in infancy decree
 What this, what t'other son should be.
 Had you with judgment weigh'd the case,
 Their genius thus had fix'd their place ;
 The Swan had learnt the sailor's art ;
 The Cock had play'd the soldier's part ;

149

The

“ you would probably have smiled at the nicety of the gardener,
 “ and thought his labour misapplied. But the conclusion of it
 “ will give you different ideas, and perhaps convince you, by the
 “ obvious analogy, that cleanliness promotes the health, vigour,
 “ and growth of the body. It may satisfy you also, that various
 “ minute attentions, on the conduct of your education, which at
 “ present may seem to be superfluous and irksome, are of real
 “ importance, by removing those causes which would retard
 “ your progress towards manly strength, and mental excellence.
 “ For every habit of awkwardness, impairs some useful power
 “ of action; and as the moss impedes the nutritious juices of
 “ the beech; so false opinions and principles, despoil the mind
 “ of a correspondent portion of knowledge and virtue. You
 “ will likewise recollect, that as the labour of the gardener
 “ rendered one tree more flourishing than the other; in the same
 “ manner, attention will sharpen abilities, and render the mind
 “ of one boy, superior to that of another.”

CAWTHORN has no less beautifully illustrated this sentiment
 in a *Tale on the Birth and Education of Genius* :

“ Yes Harriet ! say whate’er you can,
 “ ’Tis education makes the man :
 “ Whate’er of genius we inherit,
 “ Exalted sense, and lively spirit,
 “ Must all be disciplin’d by rules,
 “ And take their colour from the schools.
 “ ’Tis so with man—His talents rest
 “ Mismatchen embryos in his breast ;

“ Till

The Spider in the weavers' trade
 With credit had a fortune made ;
 But for the fool, in ev'ry class
 The blockhead had appear'd an As.

145

" Till education's eye explores,
 " The sleeping intellectual pow'rs,
 " Awakes the dawn of wit and sense,
 " And lights them into excellence.
 " On this depends the patriot flame,
 " The fine ingenuous feel of fame,
 " The manly spirit brave and bold,
 " Superior to the taint of gold.
 " The dread of infamy, the zeal
 " Of honour, and the public weal,
 " And all those virtues which preface,
 " The glories of a rising age."

JOHNSON'S POETS, v. 65, p. 208.

FABLE 15.

The Cook-maid, the Turnspit, and the Ox.

TO A POOR MAN.

CONSIDER man in ev'ry sphere,
 Then tell me, is your lot severe ?

L 5

'Tis

'Tis murmur, discontent, distrust,
That makes you wretched : God is just.

I grant, that hunger must be fed, 5
That toil too earns thy daily bread.
What then ? Thy wants are seen and known,
But ev'ry mortal feels his own.

We're born a restless needy crew :
Shew me the happier man than you. 10

ADAM, though blest above his kind,
For want of social woman pin'd ;
EVE's wants the subtle serpent saw,
Her fickle taste transgress'd the law :
Thus fell our fires ; and their disgrace 15
The curse entail'd on human race.

When PHILIP's son, by glory led,
Had o'er the globe his empire spread ;
When altars to his name were dress'd,
That he was man, his tears confess'd. 20

The hopes of avarice are check'd :
The proud man always wants respect.
What various wants on pow'r attend !
Ambition never gains its end.
Who hath not heard the rich complain 25
Of surfeits and corporeal pain ?

L. 17. *Philip's son.* Alexander the son of Philip, King of Macedon.

See *Fable 33*, part 1.

He

He, barr'd from ev'ry use of wealth,
Envies the plowman's strength and health.
Another in a beauteous wife
Finds all the miseries of life: 30

Domestic jars and jealous fear
Imbitter all his days with care.
This wants an heir, the line is lost:
Why was that vain entail ingross?
Canst thou discern another's mind? 35
What is't you envy? Envy's blind.

Tell envy when she would annoy,
That thousands want what you enjoy.

The dinner must be dish'd at one,
Where's this vexatious Turnspit gone? 40
Unless the skulking Cur is caught,
The surloin's spoil'd, and I'm in fault.

Thus said, (for sure you'll think it fit
That I the Cook-maid's oaths omit)
With all the fury of a Cook, 45
Her cooler kitchen NAN forsook.

The broomstick o'er her head she waves;
She sweats, she stamps, she puffs, she raves.
The sneaking Cur before her flies:
She whistles, calls; fair speech she tries. 50

These nought avail: her choler burns;
The fist and cudgel threat by turns;
With hasty stride she presses near;
He slinks aloof, and howls with fear.

Was ever Cur so curst (he cry'd) 55
 What star did at my birth preside?
 Am I for life by compact bound
 To tread the wheel's eternal round?
 Inglorious task! Of all our race
 No slave is half so mean and base. 60
 Had fate a kinder lot assign'd,
 And form'd me of the lap-dog kind,
 I then, in higher life employ'd;
 Had indolence and ease enjoy'd;
 And, like a gentleman, carest, 65
 Had been the lady's fav'rite guest.
 Or were I sprung from spaniel line,
 Was his sagacious nostril mine,
 By me, their never-erring guide,
 From wood and plain their feasts supply'd, 70
 Knights, squires, attendant on my pace,
 Had shar'd the pleasures of the chace.
 Endu'd with native strength and fire?
 Why call'd I not the lion fire?
 A lion! such mean views I scorn: 75
 Why was I not of woman born?
 Who dares with reason's pow'r contend?
 On man we brutal slaves depend:
 To him all creatures tribute pay,
 And lux'ry employs his day. 80

An Ox by chance o'erheard his moan,
 And thus rebuk'd the lazy drone:

Dare

Dare you at partial fate repine?
 How kind's your lot compar'd with mine!
 Decreed to toil, the barb'rous knife 85
 Hath severed me from social life;
 Urg'd by the stimulating goad,
 I drag the cumbrous waggon's load:
 'Tis mine to tame the stubborn plain,
 Break the stiff foil, and house the grain; 90
 Yet I without a murmur bear
 The various labours of the year.
 But then consider, that one day,
 (Perhaps the hour's not far away)
 You, by the duties of your post, 95
 Shall turn the spit when I'm the roast:
 And for reward shall share the feast;
 I mean, shall pick my bones at least.
 'Till now, the astonish'd Cur replies,
 I look'd on all with ev'ous eyes. 100
 How false we judge by what appears!
 All creatures feel their sev'ral cares.
 If thus yon mighty beast complains,
 Perhaps man knows superior pains.

Let

The moral of this Fable is most excellent and instructive. It exhorts us to bear the necessary evils of life with patience and resignation, and to be contented with that situation in which we are placed by Providence; from the consideration that all happiness and misery are comparative. For no man is so miserable, as not to be occasionally happy, nor so happy, as not to be occasionally miserable.

"Confess

Let envy then no more torment :
Think on the Ox, and learn content.

105

Thus

" Confess we then, that all the ills of life,
" Diseases, grief, vexations, follies, strife,
" Without distinction every soul perplex,
" Haunt every scene, and prey on all the sex.
" Yet let us own that every pleasure too,
" That glads the active, and that wings the slow,
" Alike indulgent to the rich and poor,
" Slides thro' the land, and knocks at ev'ry door."

CAWTHORN on the *Equality of Human Conditions*.

We are too apt to look above us, rather than below us; and for that reason are subject to envy and discontent; we are too apt to envy our neighbours the possession of those advantages which we do not enjoy, without being grateful for the advantages which they want, and which we enjoy.

But in fact, there is scarcely any one, however wretched he may be, who cannot find out or fancy others more wretched than himself. It is not however recommended in the Fable, to rejoice at the calamities of persons more wretched than ourselves, from a malicious satisfaction, that we are exempted from those evils to which they are exposed, but rather to draw comfort from the reflection, that we suffer only the lot of human nature, and that as we are happy or miserable, compared with others, so others are happy or miserable compared with us; Hence Dryden calls

" Content of mind the poor man's wealth."

Gay in another Fable exhorts us,

" *Appease your discontented mind,*
" *And act the part by Heaven assign'd.*"

And Young dwells in a high strain of christian piety, even on the joy which is derived from bearing calamities with resignation:

" Content is joy, and joy is pain,
" Is joy and virtue too;
" Thus while good present we possess,
" More precious we pursue: &c."

" But

Thus said; close following at her heel,
With chearful heart he mounts the wheel.

"But how to smile, to stem the tide

"Of Nature in our veins;

"Is it not hard to weep in joy?

"What then to smile in pains?

"Victorious joy! which breaks the cloud,

"And struggles through a storm:

"Proclaims the mind as great as good;

"And bids it doubly charm."

YOUNG'S *Poem on Resignation*, part 1.

FABLE 16.

The Ravens, the Sexton, and the Earth-worm.

TO LAURA.

LAURA, methinks you're over nice.

True—flatt'ry is a shocking vice;

Yet 'sure whene'er the praise is just,

One may commend without disgust.

Am I a privilege deny'd,

Indulg'd by ev'ry tongue beside?

How

How singular are all your ways !

A woman, and averse to praise !

If 'tis offence such truth to tell,

Why do your merits thus excel ?

10

Since then I dare not speak my mind,

A truth conspicuous to mankind ;

Though in full lustre ev'ry grace

Distinguish your celestial face :

Though beauties of inferior ray

15

(Like stars before the orb of day)

Turn pale and fade ; I check my lays,

Admiring what I dare not praise.

If you the tribute due disdain,

The Muse's mortifying strain

20

Shall, like a woman, in mere spite,

Set beauty in a moral light.

Though such revenge might shock the ear

Of many a celebrated fair ;

I mean that superficial race

25

Whose thoughts ne'er reach beyond their face ;

What's that to you ? I but displease

Such ever girlish ears as these.

Virtue can brook the thoughts of age ;

That lasts the same through ev'ry stage.

30

Though you by time must suffer more

Than ever woman lost before ;

To age is such indiff'rence shown,

As if your face were not your own.

Were

Were you by ANTONINUS taught? 35
 Or is it native strength of thought?
 That thus, without concern or fright,
 You view yourself by reason's light?
 Those eyes, of so divine a ray,
 What are they? Mould'ring mortal clay. 40
 Those features, cast in heav'nly mould,
 Shall, like my coarser earth, grow old:
 Like common grass, the fairest flow'r
 Must feel the hoary season's pow'r.
 How weak, how vain is human pride! 45
 Dares man upon himself confide?
 The wretch who glories in his gain,
 Amasses heaps on heaps in vain.
 Why lose we life in anxious cares,
 To lay in hoards for future years? 50
 Can those (when tortur'd by disease)
 Chear our sick heart, or purchase ease?
 Can those prolong one gasp of breath,
 Or calm the troubled hour of death?

L. 35. *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus.* A Roman emperor, born in the 121st year of the christian æra. He was adopted by Antoninus Pius, and succeeded him on the throne. The name of Marcus Aurelius is synonymous with justice, clemency, and learning. When Gay says,

“*Were you by Antoninus taught?*”

he alludes to his *Book of Meditations*, which is much admired for the excellence of its precepts.

What's

What's beauty? Call ye that your own? 55
A flow'r that fades as soon as blown.
What's man, in all his boast of sway?
Perhaps the tyrant of a day.

Alike the laws of life take place
Through ev'ry branch of human race. 60
The monarch, of long regal line,
Was rais'd from dust as frail as mine.
Can he pour health into his veins;
Or cool the fever's restless pains?
Can he, worn down in Nature's course, 65
New brace his feeble nerves with force?
Can he (how vain is mortal pow'r!)
Stretch life beyond the destin'd hour?

Consider, man; weigh well thy frame;
The king, the beggar is the same. 70
Dust form'd us all. Each breathes his day,
Then sinks into his native clay.

Beneath a venerable yew,
That in the lonely church-yard grew,
Two Ravens sat. In solemn croak 75
Thus one his hungry friend bespoke:
Methinks I scent some rich repast;
The savour strengthens with the blast;
Snuff, then, the promis'd feast inhale;
I taste the carcase in the gale, 80
Near yonder trees, the farmer's steed,
From toil and daily drudg'ry freed,

Hath

Hath groan'd his last. A dainty treat!
To birds of taste delicious meat.

A Sexton, busy at his trade,
To hear their chat suspends his spade.
Death struck him with no farther thought
Than merely as the fees he brought.

Were ever two such blund'ring fowls,
In brains and manners less than owls!
Blockheads, says he, learn more respect;
Know ye on whom you thus reflect?

In this same grave (who does me right,
Must own the work is strong and tight)
The 'Squire, that yon fair hall possess'd,
To night shall lay his bones at rest.

Whence could the gross mistake proceed?
The 'Squire was somewhat fat indeed.

What then? The meanest bird of prey
Such want of sense cou'd ne'er betray;
For sure some difference must be found
(Suppose the smelling organ sound)

In carcases (say what we can)
Or where's the dignity of man?

With due respect to human race,
The Ravens undertook the case.
In such similitude of scent,
Man ne'er could think reflection's meant.
As epicures extol a treat,

And seem their sav'ry words to eat,

110
They

They prais'd dead horse, luxurious food,
 The ven'son of the prescient brood,
 The Sexton's indignation mov'd,
 The mean comparison reprov'd ;
 Their undiscerning palate blam'd, 115
 Which two-legg'd carrion thus defam'd.

Reproachful speech from either side
 The want of argument supply'd :
 They rail, revile : as often ends
 The contest of disputing friends. 120

Hold, says the Fowl; since human pride
 With confutation ne'er comply'd,
 Let's state the case, and then refer
 The knotty point : for taste may err.

As thus he spoke, from out the mould 125
 An Earth-worm, huge of size, unroll'd
 His monstrous length. They strait agree
 To chuse him as their referee.
 So to th' experience of his jaws,
 Each states the merits of his cause. 130

He paus'd ; and, with a solemn tone,
 Thus made his sage opinion known :

L. 112. *The prescient brood.* From *præscius*, a Latin word, which signifies *fore knowing*, because the Ravens were deemed by the antients, birds of omen, and portending future events; in allusion to which Gay calls them, in another Fable,

“ *Fowls of omen, who foresee and croak the event.*”

Fable 2, part 2.

On

On carcafes of ev'ry kind
 This maw hath elegantly din'd;
 Provok'd by luxury or need; 135
 On beaft, or fowl, or man, I feed;
 Such fmall diftinction's in the favour,
 By turns I chufe the fancy'd flavour.
 Yet I muft own, that human beaft,
 A glutton, is the rankeft feaft. 140
 Man, ceafe this boaft; for human pride
 Hath various tracts to range befide.
 The prince, who kept the world in awe;
 The judge, whose dictate fix'd the law;
 The rich, the poor, the great, the fmall, 145
 Are levell'd. Death confounds 'em all.
 Then think not that we reptiles fhare
 Such cates, fuch elegance of fare:
 The only true and real good
 Of man was never vermin's food. 150
 'Tis feated in th' immortal mind;
 Virtue diftinguiſhes mankind;
 And that (as yet ne'er harbour'd here)
 Mounts with the foul we know not where.
 So, good man, Sexton, fince the cafe 155
 Appears with fuch a dubious face,

To

The moral of this concluding Fable impreſſes ſtrongly upon
 our minds, that there is no diftinction beyond the grave, but
 that which is

"Seated in the immortal mind;
 "Virtue diftinguiſhes mankind."

And

To neither I the cause determine,
For diff'rent tastes please diff'rent vermin.

And persuades us to labour to attain that great distinction:

———“ Ah! whither now are fled
“ Those dreams of greatness? those unsolid hopes
“ Of happiness? those longings after fame?
“ Those restless cares? those busy, bustling days?
“ Those gay-spent festive nights? those vexing thoughts?
“ Lost between good and ill, that shar'd thy life?
“ All now are vanish'd! VIRTUE sole survives,
“ Immortal, never-failing friend of man,
“ His guide to happiness on high.”——

THOMSON'S *Seasons*, Winter.



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